THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND,

OR A

SUPPLEMENT TO THE ART OF LOGIC.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY

ISAAC WATTS, D. D.

ALSO HIS

POSTHUMOUS WORKS,

PUBLISHED FROM HIS MANUSCRIPT.

BY D JENNINGS, D. D. AND P. DODDRIDGE, D. D.

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1794.

ADVERTISEMENT.

"FEW books have been peruſed by me with greater pleaſure than his Improvement of the Mind, of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's Conduct of the Underſtanding; but they are ſo expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer on him the merit of a work in the higheſt degree uſeful and pleaſing. Whoever has the care of inſtructing others, may be charged with deficience in his duty if this book is not recommended."

Dr Johnſon's Life of Dr Watts.



THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

PART FIRST.

CONTAINING A VARIETY OF

REMARKS AND RULES

FOR THE

Attainment and Communication of Useful Knowledge,

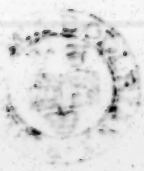
in Religion, in the Sciences, and

in common Life.

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THE

PREFACE.

IN the laſt page of the Treatiſe of Logic which I publiſhed many years ago, it is obſerved, that there are ſeveral other things which might aſſiſt the cultivation of the mind, and its improvement in knowledge, which are not uſually repreſented among the principles or precepts of that art or ſcience. Theſe are the ſubjects which compoſe this book; theſe are the ſentiments and rules, many of which I had then in view, and which I now venture into public light.

The preſent treatiſe, if it may aſſume the honour of that name, is made up of a variety of remarks and directions for the improvement of the mind in uſeful knowledge. It was collected from the obſervations which I had made on my own ſtudies, and on the temper and ſentiments, the humour and conduct of other men in their purſuit of learning, or in the affairs of life; and it has been conſiderably aſſiſted by occaſional collections in the courſe of my reading, from many authors and on different ſubjects. I confeſs, in far the greateſt part, I ſtand bound to anſwer for the weakneſſes or defects that will be found in theſe papers, not being able to point to other writers, whence the twentieth part of them is derived.

The work was compoſed at different times, and by ſlow degrees. Now and then, indeed, it ſpread itſelf into branches and leaves like a plant in April, and advanced ſeven or eight pages in a week; and ſometimes it lay by without growth, like a vegetable in the winter, and did not increaſe half ſo much in the revolution of a year.

As theſe thoughts occurred to me in reading or meditation, or in my notices of the various appearances

of things among mankind, they were thrown under thoſe heads which make the preſent titles of the chapters, and were dy degrees reduced to ſomething like a method, ſuch as the ſubject would admit.

On theſe accounts it is not to be expected that the ſame accurate order ſhould be obſerved either in the whole book, or in the particular chapters thereof, which is neceſſary in the ſyſtem of any ſcience, whoſe ſcheme is projected at once. A book which has been twenty years a-writing, may be indulged in ſome variety of ſtyle and manner, though I hope there will not be found any great difference of ſentiment; for wherein I had improved in later years beyond what I had firſt written, a few daſhes and alterations have corrected the miſtakes: and if the candour of the reader will but allow what is defective in one place, to be ſupplied by additions from another, I hope there will be found a ſufficient reconciliation of what might ſeem at firſt to be ſcarcely conſiſtent.

The language and dr.. of theſe ſentiments is ſuch as the preſent temper of mind dictated, whether it were grave or pleaſant, ſevere or ſmiling. If there has been any thing expreſſed with too much ſeverity, I ſuſpect it will be found to fall upon thoſe ſneering or daring writers of the age againſt religion, and againſt the Chriſtian ſcheme, who ſeemed to have left reaſon, or decency, or both, behind them in ſome of their writings.

The ſame apology of the length of years in compoſing this book, may ſerve alſo to excuſe a repetition of the ſame ſentiments which may happen to be found in different places without the author's deſign; but in other pages it was intended, ſo that thoſe rules for the conduct of the underſtanding which are moſt neceſſary ſhould be ſet in ſeveral lights, that they might with more frequency and more force impreſs the ſoul. I ſhall be ſufficiently ſatisfied with the good humour and le-

nity

nity of my readers, if they will please to regard these papers as parcels of imperfect sketches, which are designed by a sudden pencil, and in a thousand leisure moments, to be one day collected into landskips of some little prospects in the regions of learning, and in the world of common life, pointing out the fairest and most fruitful spots, as well as the rocks and wildernesses, and faithless morasses of the country. But I feel age advancing upon me, and my health is insufficient to perfect what I had designed, to increase and amplify these remarks, to confirm and improve these rules, and to illuminate the several pages with a richer and more beautiful variety of examples. The subject is almost endless, and new writers in the present and in following ages may still find sufficient follies, weaknesses, and dangers among mankind, to be represented in such a manner as to guard youth against them.

These hints, such as they are, I hope may be rendered some way useful to persons in younger years, who will favour them with a perusal, and who would seek the cultivation of their own understandings in the early days of life. Perhaps they may find something here which may awake a latent genius, and direct the studies of a willing mind. Perhaps it may point out to a student now and then what may employ the most useful labours of his thoughts, and accelerate his diligence in the most momentous inquiries. Perhaps a sprightly youth may here meet with something to guard or warn him against mistakes, and withhold him at other times from those pursuits which are like to be fruitless and disappointing.

Let it be observed also, that in our age several of the ladies pursue science with success: and others of them are desirous of improving their reason, even in common affairs of life, as well as the men: yet the characters which are here drawn occasionally are almost universally applied to one sex; but if any of the

other ſhall find a character which ſuits them, they may, by a ſmall change of the termination, apply and aſſume it to themſelves, and accept the inſtruction, the admonition, or the applauſe which is deſigned in it.

There is yet another thing which it is neceſſary my reader ſhould be informed of; but whether he will call it fortunate or unhappy, I know not. It is ſufficiently evident that the book conſiſts of two parts: the firſt lays down remarks and rules how we may attain uſeful knowledge ourſelves; and the ſecond, how we may beſt communicate it to others. Theſe were both deſigned to be printed in this volume: but a manuſcript which hath been near twenty years in hand, may be eaſily ſuppoſed to allow of ſuch difference in the handwriting, ſo many lines altered, ſo many things interlined, and ſo many paragraphs and pages here and there inſerted, that it was not eaſy to compute the number of ſheets that it would make in print: and it now appears, that the remarks and rules about the communication of knowledge being excluded here, they muſt be left to another volume: wherein will be contained various obſervations relating to methods of inſtruction, the ſtyle and manner of it, the way of convincing other perſons, of guarding youth againſt prejudices, of treating and managing the prejudices of men, of the uſe and abuſe of authority, of education, and of the various things in which children and youth ſhould be inſtructed, of their proper buſineſs and diverſions, and of the degrees of liberty and reſtraint therein, &c. Of all which I had once deſigned a more complete treatiſe; but my years advancing, I now deſpair to finiſh it.

The eſſays or chapters on theſe ſubjects being already written, if I am favoured with a tolerable degree of health, will be put to the preſs, when the favourable acceptance of this *firſt part* ſhall give ſufficient encouragement to proceed.

CON-

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THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

MIND.

PART I.

Directions for the Attainment of uſeful Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION.

NO man is obliged to learn and know every thing; this can neither be ſought nor required, for it is utterly impoſſible: yet all perſons are under ſome obligation to improve their own underſtanding, otherwiſe it will be a barren deſart, or a foreſt overgrown with weeds and brambles. Univerſal ignorance or infinite errors will overſpread the mind which is utterly neglected and lies without any cultivation.

Skill in the ſciences is indeed the buſineſs and profeſſion but of a ſmall part of mankind; but there are many others placed in ſuch an exalted rank in the world, as allows them much leiſure and large opportunities to cultivate their reaſon, and to beautify and enrich their minds with various knowledge. Even the lower orders of men have particular callings in life, wherein they ought to acquire a juſt degree of ſkill, and this is not to be done well without thinking and reaſoning about them.

The common duties and benefits of ſociety, which belong to every man living, as we are ſocial creatures, and even our native and neceſſary relations to a family,

a neighbourhood, or a government, oblige all perſons whatſoever to uſe their reaſoning powers upon a thouſand occaſions; every hour of life calls for ſome regular exerciſe of our judgment as to times and things, perſons and actions; without a prudent and diſcreet determination in matters before us, we ſhall be plunged into perpetual errors in our conduct. Now that which ſhould always be practiſed, muſt at ſome time be learnt.

Beſides, every ſon and daughter of Adam has a moſt important concern in the affairs of a life to come, and therefore it is a matter of the higheſt moment for every one to underſtand, to judge, and to reaſon right about the things of religion. It is in vain for any to ſay, we have no leiſure or time for it. The daily intervals of time and vacancies from neceſſary labour, together with the one day in ſeven in the Chriſtian world, allows ſufficient time for this, if men would but apply themſelves to it with half as much zeal and diligence as they do to the trifles and amuſements of this life; and it would turn to infinitely better account.

Thus it appears to be the neceſſary duty and the intereſt of every perſon living to improve his underſtanding, to inform his judgment, to treaſure up uſeful knowledge, and to acquire the ſkill of good reaſoning, as far as his ſtation, capacity, and circumſtances furniſh him with proper means for it. Our miſtakes in judgment may plunge us into much folly and guilt in practice. By acting without thought or reaſon, we diſhonour the God that made us reaſonable creatures, we often become injurious to our neighbours, kindred, or friends, and we bring ſin and miſery upon ourſelves: For we are accountable to God our judge for every part of our irregular and miſtaken conduct, where he hath given us ſufficient advantages to guard againſt thoſe miſtakes.

It is the deſign of Logic to give this improvement to the mind, and to teach us the right uſe of reaſon in the acquirement and communication of all uſeful knowledge: though the greateſt part of writers on that ſubject have turned it into a compoſition of hard words, trifles, and ſubtilties for the mere uſe of the ſchools, and that only to amuſe the minds and the ears of men with empty ſounds, which flatter their vanity, and puff up their

pride

pride with a pompous and glittering ſhew of falſe learning: and thus they have perverted the great and valuable deſign of that ſcience.

A few modern writers have endeavoured to recover the honour of Logic, ſince that excellent author of the Art of Thinking led the way: Among the reſt I have preſumed to make an attempt of the ſame kind, in a treatiſe publiſhed ſeveral years ago, wherein it was my conſtant aim to aſſiſt the reaſoning powers of every rank and order of men, as well as to keep an eye to the beſt intereſt of the ſchools and the candidates of true learning. There I have endeavoured to ſhew the miſtakes we are expoſed to in our conception, judgment, and reaſoning; and pointed to the various ſprings of them. I have alſo laid down many general and particular rules how to eſcape error, and attain truth in matters of the civil and religious life, as well as in the ſciences.

But there are ſeveral other obſervations very pertinent to this purpoſe, which have not fallen ſo directly under any of thoſe heads of diſcourſe, or at leaſt they would have ſwelled that treatiſe to an improper ſize; and therefore I have made a diſtinct collection of them here out of various authors, as well as from my own obſervation, and ſet them down under the following heads.

The learned world who has done ſo much unmerited honour to that logical treatiſe, as to receive it into our two flouriſhing univerſities, may poſſibly admit this as a ſecond part or ſupplement to that treatiſe. And I may venture to perſuade myſelf, that if the common and the buſy ranks of mankind, as well as the ſcholar and the gentleman, would but tranſcribe ſuch rules into their underſtanding, and practiſe them upon all occaſions, there would be much more truth and knowledge found among men; and it is reaſonable to hope that juſtice, virtue, and goodneſs would attend as the happy conſequents.

CHAP. I.

General Rules for the improvement of Knowledge.*

I. Rule.

DEEPLY poſſeſs your mind with the vaſt importance of a good judgment, and the rich and ineſtimable advantage of right reaſoning. Review the inſtances of your own miſconduct in life; think ſeriouſly with yourſelves how many follies and ſorrows you had eſcaped, and how much guilt and miſery you had prevented, if from your early years you had but taken due pains to judge aright concerning perſons, times, and things. This will awaken you with lively vigour to addreſs yourſelves to the work of improving your reaſoning powers, and ſeizing every opportunity and advantage for that end.

II. *Rule.* Consider the weakneſſes, frailties, and miſtakes of human nature in general, which ariſe from the very conſtitution of a ſoul united to an animal body, and ſubjected to many inconveniences thereby. Conſider the many additional weakneſſes, miſtakes, and frailties which are derived from our original apoſtacy and fall from a ſtate of innocence; how much our powers of underſtanding are yet more darkened, enfeebled, and impoſed upon by our ſenſes, our fancies, and our unruly paſſions, &c. Conſider the depth and difficulty of many truths, and the flattering appearances of falſehood, whence ariſes an infinite variety of dangers to which we are expoſed in our judgment of things. Read with readineſs thoſe authors that treat of the doctrine of prejudices, prepoſſeſſions, and ſprings of error, on purpoſe to make your ſoul watchful on all ſides, that it ſuffer not itſelf

* Though the moſt of theſe following rules are chiefly addreſſed to thoſe whom their fortune or their ſtation require to addict themſelves to the peculiar improvement of their minds in greater degrees of knowledge, yet every one who has leiſure and opportunity to be acquainted with ſuch writings as theſe may find ſomething among them for their own uſe.

itſelf as far as poſſible to be impoſed upon by any of them. See more on this ſubject, Logic, Part II. Chap. 3. and Part III. Chap. 3.

III. *Rule.* A SLIGHT view of things ſo momentous is not ſufficient. You ſhould therefore contrive and practiſe ſome proper methods to acquaint yourſelf with your own ignorance, and to impreſs your mind with a deep and painful ſenſe of the low and imperfect degrees of your preſent knowledge, that you may be incited with labour and activity to purſue after greater meaſures. Among others you may find ſome ſuch methods as theſe ſucceſsful.

1. Take a wide ſurvey now and then of the vaſt and unlimited regions of learning. Let your meditations run over the names of all the ſciences, with their numerous branches, and innumerable particular themes of knowledge; and then reflect how few of them you are acquainted with in any tolerable degree. The moſt learned of mortals will never find occaſion to act over again what is fabled of Alexander the Great, that when he had conquered what was called the Eaſtern World, he wept for want of more worlds to conquer. The worlds of ſcience are immenſe and endleſs.

2. Think what a numberleſs variety of queſtions and difficulties there are belonging even to that particular ſcience in which you have made the greateſt progreſs, and how few of them there are in which you have arrived at a final and undoubted certainty; excepting only thoſe queſtions in the pure and ſimple mathematics, whoſe theorems are demonſtrable and leave ſcarcely any doubt; and yet even in the purſuit of ſome few of theſe, mankind have been ſtrangely bewildered.

3. Spend a few thoughts ſometimes on the puzzling inquiries concerning vacuums and atoms, the doctrine of infinites, indiviſibles, and incommenſurables in geometry, wherein there appear ſome inſolvable difficulties: Do this on purpoſe to give you a more ſenſible impreſſion of the poverty of your underſtanding, and the imperfection of your knowledge. This will teach you what a vain thing it is to fancy that you know all things; and will inſtruct you to think modeſtly of your preſent attainments, when every duſt of the earth and every

inch of empty ſpace ſurmounts your underſtanding and triumphs over your preſumption. Arithmo had been bred up to accounts all his life, and thought himſelf a complete maſter of numbers. But when he was puſhed hard to give the ſquare root of the number 2, he tried at it, and laboured long in milleſimal fractions, until he confeſſed there was no end of the enquiry; and yet he learnt ſo much modeſty by this perplexing queſtion, that he was afraid to ſay, it was an impoſſible thing. It is ſome good degree of improvement when we are afraid to be poſitive.

4. Read the accounts of thoſe vaſt treaſures of knowledge, which ſome of the dead have poſſeſſed, and ſome of the living do poſſeſs. Read and be aſtoniſhed at the almoſt incredible advances which have been made in ſcience. Acquaint yourſelves with ſome perſons of great learning, that by converſe among them, and comparing yourſelves with them, you may acquire a mean opinion of your own attainments, and may be thereby animated with new zeal, to equal them as far as poſſible, or to exceed: thus let your diligence be quickened by a generous and laudable emulation. If Vanillus had never met with Scitorio and Polydes, he had never imagined himſelf a mere novice in Philoſophy, nor ever ſet himſelf to ſtudy in good earneſt.

Remember this, that if upon ſome few ſuperficial acquirements you value, exalt, and ſwell yourſelf as though you were a man of learning already, you are thereby building a moſt unpaſſable barrier againſt all improvement; you will lie down and indulge idleneſs, and reſt yourſelf contented in the midſt of deep and ſhameful ignorance. *Multi ad ſcientiam perveniſſent ſi ſe illuc perveniſſe non putaſſent.*

IV. *Rule.* PRESUME not too much upon a bright genius, a ready wit, and good parts, for this without labour and ſtudy will never make a man of knowledge and wiſdom. This has been an unhappy temptation to perſons of a vigorous and gay fancy, to deſpiſe learning and ſtudy. They have been acknowledged to ſhine in an aſſembly, and ſparkle in diſcourſe upon common topics, and thence they took it into their heads to abandon reading and labour, and grow old in ignorance;

ignorance; but when they had loſt the vivacities of animal nature and youth, they became ſtupid and fottiſh even to contempt and ridicule. Lucidus and Scintillo are young men of this ſtamp: they ſhine in converſation, they ſpread their native riches before the ignorant; they pride themſelves in their own lively images of fancy, and imagine themſelves wiſe and learned; but they had beſt avoid the preſence of the ſkilful and the teſt of reaſoning; and I would adviſe them once a-day to think forward a little, what a contemptible figure they will make in age.

The witty men ſometimes have ſenſe enough to know their own foible, and therefore they craftily ſhun the attacks of argument, or boldly pretend to deſpiſe and renounce them; becauſe they are conſcious of their own ignorance, and inwardly confeſs their want of acquaintance with the ſkill of reaſoning.

V. Rule. As you are not to fancy yourſelf a learned man becauſe you are bleſſed with a ready wit, ſo neither muſt you imagine that large and laborious reading, and a ſtrong memory, can denominate you truly wiſe.

What that excellent critic has determined when he decided the queſtion, whether wit or ſtudy makes the beſt poet, may well be applied to every ſort of learning——

——Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite vena
Ne crude quid proſit, video, ingenium: alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, et conjurat amice.

Hor. de Art. Poet.

Thus made Engliſh:

Concerning poets there has been conteſt,
Whether they're made by art, or nature beſt;
But if I may preſume in this affair,
Among the reſt my judgment to declare,
No art without a genius will avail,
And parts without the help of art will fail:
But both ingredients jointly muſt unite,
Or verſe will never ſhine with a tranſcendent light.

Oldham.

It

It is meditation and ſtudious thought, it is the exerciſe of your own reaſon and judgment upon all you read, that gives good ſenſe even to the beſt genius, and affords your underſtading the trueſt improvement. A boy of ſtrong memory may repeat a whole book of Euclid, yet be no Geometrician; for he may not be able perhaps to demonſtrate one ſingle theorem. Memorino has learnt half the bible by heart, and is become a living concordance and a ſpeaking index to theological folios, and yet he underſtands little of divinity.

A well furniſhed library and a capacious memory, are indeed of ſingular uſe towards the improvement of the mind; but if all your learning be nothing elſe but a mere amaſſment of what others have written, without a due penetration into their meaning, and without a judicious choice and determination of your own ſentiments, I do not ſee what title your head has to true learning above your ſhelves. Though you have read Philoſophy and Theology, Morals and Metaphyſics in abundance, and every other art and ſcience, yet if your memory is the only faculty employed, with the neglect of your reaſoning powers, you can juſtly claim no higher character but that of a good hiſtorian of the ſciences.

Here note, Many of the foregoing advices are more peculiarly proper for thoſe who are conceited of their abilities, and are ready to entertain a high opinion of themſelves. But a modeſt humble youth of a good genius, ſhould not ſuffer himſelf to be diſcouraged by any of theſe conſiderations. They are deſigned only as a ſpur to diligence, and a guard againſt vanity and pride.

VI. *Rule.* Be not ſo weak as to imagine that a life of learning is a life of lazineſs and eaſe: dare not give up yourſelf to any of the learned profeſſions unleſs you are reſolved to labour hard at ſtudy, and can make it your delight and the joy of your life, according to the motto of our late Lord Chancellor King,

Labor ipſe voluptas.

It is no idle thing to be a ſcholar indeed. A man, much

much addicted to luxury and pleasure, recreation and pastime, should never pretend to devote himself entirely to the sciences, unless his soul be so reformed and refined that he can taste all these entertainments eminently in his closet, among his books and papers. Sobrino is a temperate man and a philosopher, and he feeds upon partridge and pheasant, venison and ragouts, and every delicacy, in a growing understanding, and a serene and healthy soul, though he dines on a dish of sprouts or turnips. Languinus loved his ease, and therefore chose to be brought up a scholar; he had much indolence in his temper, and as he never cared for study, he falls under universal contempt in his profession, because he has nothing but the gown and the name.

VII. Let the hope of new discoveries, as well as the satisfaction and pleasure of known truths, animate your daily industry. Do not think learning in general is arrived at its perfection, or that the knowledge of any particular subject in any science cannot be improved, merely because it has lain five hundred or a thousand years without improvement. The present age, by the blessing of God on the ingenuity and diligence of men, has brought to light such truths in natural philosophy, and such discoveries in the heavens and the earth, as seemed to be beyond the reach of man. But may not there be Sir Isaac Newtons in every science? You should never despair therefore of finding out that which has never yet been found, unless you see something in the nature of it which renders it unsearchable, and above the reach of our faculties.

Nor should a student in divinity imagine that our age is arrived at a full understanding of every thing which can be known by the scriptures. Every age since the reformation hath thrown some further light on difficult texts and paragraphs of the bible, which have been long obscured by the early rise of antichrist: and since there are at present many difficulties and darknesses hanging about certain truths of the Christian Religion, and since several of these relate to important doctrines, such as the Origin of Sin, the Fall of Adam, the Person of Christ, the Blessed Trinity, and the

the Decrees of God, &c. which do ſtill embarraſs the minds of honeſt and inquiring readers, and which make work for noiſy controverſy: it is certain there are ſeveral things in the bible yet unknown and not ſufficiently explained, and it is certain that there is ſome way to ſolve theſe difficulties, and to reconcile theſe ſeeming contradictions. And why may not a ſincere ſearcher of truth in the preſent age, by labour, diligence, ſtudy, and prayer, with the beſt uſe of his reaſoning powers, find out the proper ſolution of thoſe knots and perplexities which hath hitherto been unſolved, and which have afforded matter for angry quarrelling? Happy is every man who ſhall be favoured of heaven to give a helping hand towards that introduction of the bleſſed age of light and love.

VIII. Do not hover always on the ſurface of things, nor take up ſuddenly with mere appearances; but penetrate into the depth of matters, as far as your time and circumſtances allow, eſpecially in thoſe things which relate to your own profeſſion. Do not indulge yourſelves to judge of things by the firſt glimpſe, or a ſhort and ſuperficial view of them; for this will fill the mind with errors and prejudices, and give it a wrong turn and ill habit of thinking, and make much work for retraction. Subito is carried away with title-pages, ſo that he ventures to pronounce upon a large octavo at once, and to recommend it wonderfully when he had read half the Preface. Another volume of controverſies of equal ſize, was diſcarded by him at once, becauſe it pretended to treat of the trinity, and yet he could neither find the word eſſence nor ſubſiſtencies in the 12 firſt pages: but Subito changes his opinions of men and books and things ſo often, that nobody regards him.

As for thoſe ſciences, or thoſe parts of knowledge, which either your profeſſion, your leiſure, your inclination, or your incapacity, forbid you to purſue with much application, or to ſearch far into them, you muſt be contented with an hiſtorical and ſuperficial knowledge of them, and not pretend to form many judgments of your own on thoſe ſubjects which you underſtand very imperfectly.

IX.

IX. Once a-day, especially in the early years of life and study, call yourselves to an account what new ideas, what new proposition or truth you have gained, what further confirmation of known truths, and what advances you have made in any part of knowledge; and let no day if possible pass away without some intellectual gain: such a course well pursued, must certainly advance us in useful knowledge. It is a wise proverb among the learned, borrowed from the lips and practice of a celebrated painter, *nulla dies sine linea*; let no day pass without one line at least: and it was a sacred rule among the Pythagoreans, that they should every evening thrice run over the actions and affairs of the day, and examine what their conduct hath been, what they had done, or what they have neglected; and they assured their pupils, that by this method they would make a noble progress in the path of virtue.

Μηδ' υπνον μαλακοισιν επ' ομμασι προσδεξασθαι
Πριν των ημερινων εργων τρις εκαστον επελθειν.
Πη παρεβην; τι δ' ερεξα; τι μοι δεον ουκ ετελεσθη;
Ταυτα σε της θειης αρετης εις ιχνια θησει.

Nor let soft slumber close your eyes
Before you've recollected thrice
The train of actions through the day:
Where have my feet chose out the way?
What have I learnt, where'er I've been,
From all I've heard, from all I've seen?
What know I more that's worth the knowing?
What have I done that's worth the doing?
What have I fought that I should shun?
What duty have I left undone;
Or into what new follies run?
These self-inquiries are the road
That leads to virtue and to God.

I would be glad among a nation of Christians, to find young men heartily engaged in the practice of what this heathen writer teaches.

X. MAINTAIN a constant watch at all times against a dogmatical spirit: fix not your assent to any proposition

tion in a firm and unalterable manner, till you have ſome firm and unalterable ground for it, and till you have arrived at ſome clear and ſure evidence; till you have turned the propoſition on all ſides, and ſearched the matter through and through, ſo that you cannot be miſtaken. And even where you may think you have full grounds of aſſurance, be not too early, nor too frequent in expreſſing this aſſurance in too peremptory and poſitive a manner, remembering that human nature is always liable to miſtake in this corrupt and feeble ſtate. A dogmatical ſpirit has many inconveniences attending it: as,

1. It ſtops the ear againſt all further reaſoning upon that ſubject, and ſhuts up the mind from all farther improvements of knowledge. If you have reſolutely fixed your opinion, though it be upon too ſlight and inſufficient grounds, yet you will ſtand determined to renounce the ſtrongeſt reaſon brought for the contrary opinion, and grow obſtinate againſt the force of the cleareſt argument. *Poſitivo* is a man of this character, and has often pronounced his aſſurance of the *Carteſian* vortexes: laſt year ſome further light broke in upon his underſtanding, with uncontrollable force, by reading ſomething of mathematical philoſophy; yet having aſſerted his former opinions in a moſt confident manner, he is tempted now to wink a little againſt the truth, or to prevaricate in his diſcourſe upon that ſubject, leſt by admitting conviction, he ſhould expoſe himſelf to the neceſſity of confeſſing his former folly and miſtake; and he has not humility enough for that.

2. A dogmatical ſpirit naturally leads us to arrogance of mind, and gives a man ſome airs in converſation, which are too haughty and aſſuming. Audens is a man of learning, and very good company, but his infallible aſſurance renders his carriage ſometimes inſupportable.

3. A dogmatical ſpirit inclines a man to be cenſorious of his neighbours. Every one of his opinions appears to him written as it were with ſun-beams, and he grows angry that his neighbour does not ſee it in the ſame light. He is tempted to diſdain his correſpondents as men of a low and dark underſtanding, becauſe

they will not believe what he does. Furio goes farther in this wild track, and charges those who refuse his notions with wilful obstinacy and vile hypocrisy; he tells them boldly, that they resist the truth, and sin against their consciences.

These are the men, that, when they deal in controversy, delight in reproaches. They abound in tossing about absurdity and stupidity among their brethren: They cast the imputation of heresy and nonsense plentifully upon their antagonists; and in matters of sacred importance, they deal out their anathemas in abundance upon Christians better than themselves; they denounce damnation upon their neighbours without either justice or mercy; and, when they pronounce sentences of divine wrath against supposed heretics, they add their own human fire and indignation. A dogmatist in religion is not a great way off from a bigot, and is in high danger of growing up to be a bloody persecutor.

XI. Though caution and slow assent will guard you against frequent mistakes and retractions, yet you should get humility and courage enough to retract any mistake, and confess an error: frequent changes are tokens of levity in our first determinations; yet you should never be too proud to change your opinion, nor frighted at the name of a changeling. Learn to scorn those vulgar bugbears which confirm foolish man in his old mistakes, for fear of being charged with inconstancy. I confess it is better not to judge, than to judge falsely, and it is wiser to with-hold our assent till we see complete evidence; but if we have too suddenly given our assent, as the wisest man does sometimes, if we have professed what we find afterwards to be false, we should never be ashamed nor afraid to renounce a mistake. That is a noble essay which is found among the occasional papers, to encourage the world to practise retractions; and I would recommend it to the perusal of every scholar and every Christian.

XII. He that would raise his judgment above the vulgar rank of mankind, and learn to pass a just sentence on persons and things, must take heed of a fanciful temper of mind, and a humorous conduct in his affairs.

fairs. Fancy and humour early and conſtantly indulged, may expect an old age overrun with follies.

The notion of a humoriſt is, one that is greatly pleaſed or greatly diſpleaſed with little things, who ſets his heart much upon matters of very small importance, who has his will determined every day by trifles, his actions ſeldom directed by the reaſon and nature of things, and his paſſions frequently raiſed by things of little moment. Where this practice is allowed, it will inſenſibly warp the judgment to pronounce little things great, and tempt you to lay a great weight upon them. In ſhort, this temper will incline you to paſs an unjuſt value on almoſt every thing that occurs; and every ſtep that you take in this path is juſt ſo far out of the way to wiſdom.

XIII. For the ſame reaſon have a care of trifling with things important and momentous, or of ſporting with things awful and ſacred: do not indulge a ſpirit of ridicule, as ſome witty men do on all occaſions and ſubjects. This will as unhappily bias the judgment on the other ſide, and incline you to paſs a low eſteem on the moſt valuable objects. Whatſoever evil habit we indulge in practice, it will inſenſibly obtain a power over our underſtanding, and betray us into many errors. Jocander is ready with his jeſt to anſwer every thing that he hears; he reads books in the ſame jovial humour, and has got the art of turning every thought and ſentence into merriment. How many awkward and irregular judgments does this man paſs upon ſolemn ſubjects, even when he deſigns to be grave and in earneſt? His mirth and laughing humour is formed into habit and temper, and leads his underſtanding ſhamefully aſtray. You will ſee him wandering in purſuit of a gay flying feather, and he is drawn by a ſort of *ignis fatuus* into bogs and mire almoſt every day of his life.

XIV. Ever maintain a virtuous and pious frame of ſpirit; for an indulgence of vicious inclinations debaſes the underſtanding, and perverts the judgment. Whoredom and wine, and new wine, take away the heart and ſoul and reaſon of a man. Senſuality ruins the better faculties of the mind: an indulgence to appetite and paſſion enfeebles the powers of reaſon, it makes

makes the judgment weak and ſuſceptive of every falſehood, and eſpecially of ſuch miſtakes as have a tendency towards the gratification of the animal; and it warps the ſoul aſide ſtrangely from that ſtedfaſt honeſty and integrity that neceſſarily belongs to the purſuit of truth. It is the virtuous man who is in a fair way to wiſdom. "God gives to thoſe that are good in his ſight wiſ-"dom, and knowledge, and joy," Eccl. ii. 26.

Piety towards God, as well as ſobriety and virtue, are neceſſary qualifications to make a truly wiſe and judicious man. He that abandons religion muſt act in ſuch a contradiction to his own conſcience and beſt judgment, that he abuſes and ſpoils the faculty itſelf. It is thus in the nature of things, and it is thus by the righteous judgment of God: even the pretended ſages among the heathens, who did not like to retain God in their knowledge, they were given up to a reprobate mind, εις αδοκιμον νοημα, an undiſtinguiſhing or injudicious mind, ſo that they judged inconſiſtently, and practiſed mere abſurdities, τα μη καθηκοντα, Rom. i. 28.

And it is the character of the ſlaves to Antichriſt, 2 Theſſ. ii. 10. &c. that thoſe "who receive not the "love of the truth, were expoſed to the power of dia-"bolical ſlights and lying wonders." When divine revelation ſhines and blazes in the face of men with glorious evidence, and they wink their eyes againſt it, the God of this world is ſuffered to blind them even in the moſt obvious, common, and ſenſible things. The great God of heaven, for this cauſe, ſends them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lie; and the nonſenſe of tranſubſtantiation in the popiſh world is a moſt glaring accompliſhment of this prophecy, beyond ever what could have been thought of or expected among creatures who pretend to reaſon.

XV. Watch againſt the pride of your own reaſon, and a vain conceit of your intellectual powers, with the neglect of divine aid and bleſſing. Preſume not upon great attainments in knowledge by your own ſelf-ſufficiency: thoſe who truſt to their own underſtanding entirely, are pronounced fools in the word of God: and it is the wiſeſt of men gives them this character, "he "that truſteth in his own heart is a fool," Prov.

xxviii. 26. And the ſame divine writer adviſes us to "truſt in the Lord with all our heart, and not to lean "to our own underſtandings, nor to be wiſe in our "own eyes," Chap. iii. 5. 7.

Thoſe who, with a neglect of religion, and dependence upon God, apply themſelves to ſearch out every article in the things of God by the mere dint of their own reaſon, have been ſuffered to run into wild exceſſes of folery, and ſtrange extravagance of opinions. Every one who purſues this vain courſe, and will not aſk for the conduct of God in the ſtudy of religion, has juſt reaſon to fear he ſhall be left of God, and given up a prey to a thouſand prejudices: that he ſhall be conſigned over to the follies of his own heart, and purſue his own temporal and eternal ruin. And even in common ſtudies, we ſhould by humility and dependence engage the God of truth on our ſide

XVI. Offer up therefore your daily requeſts to God the Father of lights, that he would bleſs all your attempts and labours in reading, ſtudy, and converſation. Think with yourſelf, how eaſily and how inſenſibly, by one turn of thought, he can lead you into a large ſcene of uſeful ideas: he can teach you to lay hold on a clew which may guide your thoughts with ſafety and eaſe through all the difficulties of an intricate ſubject. Think how eaſily the Author of your beings can direct your motions by his providence, ſo that the glance of an eye, or a word ſtriking the ear, or a ſudden turn of the fancy, ſhall conduct you to a train of happy ſentiments. By his ſecret and ſupreme method of government he can draw you to read ſuch a treatiſe, or to converſe with ſuch a perſon who may give you more light into ſome deep ſubject in an hour, than you could obtain by a month of your own ſolitary labour.

Think with yourſelf, with how much eaſe the God of ſpirits can caſt into your mind ſome uſeful ſuggeſtion, and give a happy turn to your own thoughts, or the thoughts of thoſe with whom you converſe, whence you may derive unſpeakable light and ſatisfaction in a matter that has long puzzled and entangled you: he can ſhew you a "path which the vulture's "eye has not ſeen," and lead you by ſome unknown

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gate or portal, out of a wilderneſs and labyrinth of difficulties wherein you have been long wandering.

Implore conſtantly his divine grace to point your inclinations to proper ſtudies, and to fix your heart there. He can keep off temptations on the right-hand and on the left, both by the courſe of his providence, and by the ſecret and inſenſible intimations of his Spirit. He can guard your underſtanding from every evil influence of error, and ſecure you from the danger of evil books and men, which might otherwiſe have a fatal effect, and lead you into pernicious miſtakes.

Nor let this ſort of advice fall under the cenſure of the godleſs and profane, as a mere piece of bigotry or enthuſiaſm derived from faith and the bible: for the reaſons which I have given to ſupport this pious practice of invoking the bleſſing of God on our ſtudies, are derived from the light of nature as well as revelation. He that made our ſouls and is the Father of ſpirits, ſhall he not be ſuppoſed to have a moſt friendly influence towards the inſtruction and government of them? The Author of our rational powers can involve them in darkneſs when he pleaſes by a ſudden diſtemper, or he can abandon them to wander into dark and fooliſh opinions when they are filled with a vain conceit of their own light. He expects to be acknowledged in the common affairs of life, and he does as certainly expect it in the ſuperior operations of the mind, and in the ſearch of knowledge and truth. The very Greek heathens by the light of reaſon were taught to ſay, Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεθα, and the Latins, *A Jove principium, muſæ.* In the works of learning they thought it neceſſary to begin with God. Even the poets call upon the muſe as a goddeſs to aſſiſt them in their compoſitions.

The firſt lines of Homer in his Iliad and his Odyſſey, the firſt line of Muſæus in his ſong of Hero and Leander, the beginning of Heſiod in his poem of Weeks and Days, and ſeveral others, furniſh us with ſufficient examples of this kind; nor does Ovid leave out this piece of devotion as he begins his ſtories of the Metamorphoſis. Chriſtianity ſo much the more obliges us by the precepts of Scripture to invoke the aſſiſtance of the true God in

all our labours of the mind, for the improvement of ourſelves and others. Biſhop Saunderſon ſays, that ſtudy without prayer is atheiſm, as well as that prayer without ſtudy is preſumption. And we are ſtill more abundantly encouraged by the teſtimony of thoſe who have acknowledged from their own experience, that ſincere prayer was no hinderance to their duties; they have gotten more knowledge ſometimes upon their knees, than by their labour in peruſing a variety of authors; and they have left this obſervation for ſuch as follow, *Bene oraſſe eſt bene ſtuduiſſe.* Praying is the beſt ſtudying.

To conclude, let induſtry and devotion join together, and you need not doubt the happy ſucceſs, Prov. ii. 2. "Incline thine ear to wiſdom, apply thine heart to "underſtanding: cry after knowledge, and lift up thy "voice; ſeek her as ſilver, and ſearch for her as for "hidden treaſures: then ſhalt thou underſtand the "fear of the Lord, &c. which is the beginning of "wiſdom. It is the Lord who gives wiſdom even to "the ſimple, and out of his mouth cometh knowledge "and underſtanding."

CHAP. II.

Obſervation, Reading, Inſtruction by Lectures, Converſation, and Study compared.

THERE are five eminent means or methods whereby the mind is improved in the knowledge of things, and theſe are obſervation, reading, inſtruction by lectures, converſation, and meditation; which laſt in a moſt peculiar manner is called ſtudy.

Let us ſurvey the general definitions or deſcriptions of them all.

I. OBSERVATION is the notice that we take of all occurrences in human life, whether they are ſenſible or intellectual, whether relating to perſons or things, to ourſelves or others. It is this that furniſhes us, even from our infancy, with a rich variety of ideas and propoſitions, words and phraſes; it is by this we know that fire

fire will burn, that the ſun gives light, that a horſe eats graſs, that an acorn produces an oak, that man is a being capable of reaſoning and diſcourſe, that our judgment is weak, that our miſtakes are many, that our ſorrows are great, that our bodies die and are carried to the grave, and that one generation ſucceeds another. All thoſe things which we ſee, which we hear or feel, which we perceive by ſenſe or conſciouſneſs, or which we know in a direct manner, with ſcarce any exerciſe of our reflecting faculties or our reaſoning powers, may be included under the general name of obſervation.

When this obſervation relates to any thing that immediately concerns ourſelves, and of which we are conſcious, it may be called experience. So I am ſaid to know or experience that I have in myſelf a power of thinking, fearing, loving, &c. that I have appetites and paſſions working in me, and many perſonal occurrences have attended me in this life.

Obſervation therefore includes all that Mr Locke means by ſenſation and reflection.

When we are ſearching out the nature or properties of any being, by various methods of trial; or when we apply ſome active powers or ſet ſome cauſes at work, to obſerve what effects they would produce, this ſort of obſervation is called experiment. So when I throw a bullet into water, I find it ſinks: and when I throw the ſame bullet into quickſilver, I ſee it ſwims: but if I beat out this bullet into a thin hollow ſhape like a diſh, then it will ſwim in the water too. So when I ſtrike two flints together, I find they produce fire; when I throw a ſeed into the earth, it grows up into a plant.

All theſe belong to the firſt method of knowledge, which I call obſervation.

II. READING is that means or method of knowledge, whereby "we acquaint ourſelves with what other "men have written or publiſhed to the world in their "writings." Theſe arts of reading and writing are of infinite advantage; for by them we are made partakers of the ſentiments, obſervations, reaſonings, and improvements of all the learned world, in the moſt remote nations,

nations, and in former ages, almoſt from the beginning of mankind.

III. Public or private lectures, are ſuch "verbal "inſtructions as are given by a teacher while the "learners attend in ſilence." This is the way of learning religion from the pulpit, or of philoſophy or theology from the profeſſor's chair, or of mathematics by a teacher ſhewing us various theorems or problems, i. e. ſpeculations or practices, by demonſtration and operation, with all the inſtruments of art neceſſary to thoſe operations.

IV. Converſation is another method of improving our minds, wherein "by mutual diſcourſe and "inquiry, we learn the ſentiments of others, as well "as communicate our ſentiments to others in the ſame "manner." Sometimes indeed, though both parties ſpeak by turns, yet the advantage is only on one ſide; as, when a teacher and a learner meet and diſcourſe together: but frequently the profit is mutual. Under this head of converſation, we may alſo rank diſputes of various kinds.

V. Meditation or ſtudy includes all thoſe "exer-"ciſes of the mind whereby we render all the former "methods uſeful for our increaſe in true knowledge "and wiſdom." It is by meditation we come to confirm our memory of things that paſs through our thoughts in the occurrences of life, in our own experiences, and in the obſervations we make: it is by meditation that we draw various inferences, and eſtabliſh in our minds general principles of knowledge. It is by meditation that we compare the various ideas which we derive from our ſenſes, or from the operations of our ſouls, and join them in propoſitions. It is by meditation that we fix in our memory whatſoever we learn, and form our own judgment of the truth or falſehood, the ſtrength or weakneſs of what others ſpeak or write. It is meditation or ſtudy that draws out long chains of argument, and ſearches and finds deep and difficult truths, which before lay concealed in darkneſs.

It would be a needleſs thing to prove that our own ſolitary meditations, together with the few obſervations that the moſt part of mankind are capable of making, are

are not ſufficient of themſelves to lead us into the attainment of any conſiderable proportion of knowledge, at leaſt in an age ſo much improved as ours is, without the aſſiſtance of converſation and reading, and other proper inſtructions that are to be attained in our days. Yet each of theſe five methods have their peculiar advantages, whereby they aſſiſt each other; and their peculiar defects, which have need to be ſupplied by the other's aſſiſtance. Let us trace over ſome of the particular advantages of each.

I. ONE method of improving the mind is obſervation, and the advantages of it are theſe.

1. It is owing to obſervation that our "mind is furniſhed with the firſt, ſimple and complex ideas." It is this lays the ground-work and foundation of all knowledge, and makes us capable of uſing any of the other methods for improving the mind: for if we did not attain a variety of ſenſible and intellectual ideas by the ſenſation of outward objects, by the conſciouſneſs of our own appetites and paſſions, pleaſures, and pains, and by inward experience of the actings of our own ſpirits, it would be impoſſible either for men or books to teach us any thing. It is obſervation that muſt give us our firſt ideas of things, as it includes in it ſenſe and conſciouſneſs.

2. All our knowledge derived from obſervation, whether it be of ſingle ideas or of propoſitions, is knowledge gotten at firſt hand. Hereby we ſee and know things as they are, or as they appear to us; we take the impreſſions of them on our minds from the original objects themſelves, which give a clearer and ſtronger conception of things; theſe ideas are more lively, and the propoſitions (at leaſt in many caſes) are much more evident. Whereas what knowledge we derive from lectures, reading, and converſation, is but the copy of other men's ideas, that is, the picture of a picture; and it is one remove further from the original.

3. Another advantage of obſervation is, that we may gain knowledge all the day long, and every moment of our lives, and every moment of our exiſtence we may be adding ſomething to our intellectual treaſures thereby, except only while we are aſleep; and even then the remembrance

remembrance of our dreaming will teach us ſome truths, and lay a foundation for a better acquaintance with human nature, both in the powers and in the frailties of it.

II. The next way of improving the mind is by reading, and the advantages of it are ſuch as theſe.

1. By reading we acquaint ourſelves in a very extenſive manner "with the affairs, actions, and thoughts of "the living and the dead, in the moſt remote nations, "and in moſt diſtant ages;" and that with as much eaſe as though they lived in our own age and nation. By reading of books we may learn ſomething from all parts of mankind; whereas by obſervation we learn all from ourſelves, and only what comes within our own direct cognizance; by converſation we can only enjoy the aſſiſtance of a very few perſons, viz. thoſe who are near us, and live at the ſame time when we do, that is, our neighbours and contemporaries: but our knowledge is much more narrowed ſtill, if we confine ourſelves merely to our own ſolitary reaſonings, without much obſervation or reading: For then all our improvement muſt ariſe only from our own inward powers and meditations.

2. By reading we learn not only the actions and the ſentiments of different nations and ages, but we transfer to ourſelves the knowledge and improvements of the "moſt learned men, the wiſeſt and the beſt of man-"kind," when or whereſoever they lived: For though many books have been written by weak and injudicious perſons, yet the moſt of thoſe books which have obtained great reputation in the world, are the products of great and wiſe men in their ſeveral ages and nations: whereas we can obtain the converſation and inſtruction of thoſe only who are within the reach of our dwelling, or our acquaintance, whether they are wiſe or unwiſe: and ſometimes that narrow ſphere ſcarcely affords any perſon of great eminence in wiſdom or learning, unleſs our inſtructor happen to have this character. And as for our own ſtudy and meditations, even when we arrive at ſome good degrees of learning, our advantage for further improvement in knowledge by them is ſtill far more contracted than what we may derive from reading.

3. When

3. When we read good authors we learn "the beſt, "the moſt laboured, and moſt refined ſentiments even "of thoſe wiſe and learned men;" for they have ſtudied hard, and have committed to writing their maturest thoughts, and the reſult of their long ſtudy and experience: whereas by converſation, and in ſome lectures, we obtain many times only the preſent thoughts of our tutors or friends which (though they may be bright and uſeful) yet, at firſt perhaps, may be ſudden and indigeſted, and are mere hints which have riſen to no maturity.

4. It is another advantage of reading, that we may "review what we have read;" we may conſult the page again and again, and meditate on it at ſucceſſive ſeaſons in our ſerener and retired hours, having the book always at hand: but what we obtain by converſation and in lectures, is oftentimes loſt again as ſoon as the company breaks up, or at leaſt when the day vaniſhes; unleſs we happen to have the talent of a good memory, or quickly retire and note down what remarkables we have found in thoſe diſcourſes. And for the ſame reaſon, and for want of retiring and writing, many a learned man has loſt ſeveral uſeful meditations of his own, and could never recal them again.

III. The advantages of verbal inſtructions by public or private lectures are theſe.

1. There is ſomething more ſprightly, more delightful, and entertaining in the living diſcourſe of a wiſe, a learned, and well-qualified teacher, than there is in the ſilent and ſedentary practice of reading. The very turn of voice, the good pronunciation, and the polite and alluring manner which ſome teachers have attained, will engage the attention, keep the ſoul fixed, and convey and inſinuate into the mind the ideas of things in a more lively and forcible way, than the mere reading of books in the ſilence and retirement of the cloſet.

2. A tutor or inſtructor, when he paraphraſes and explains other authors, can "mark out the preciſe point "of difficulty or controverſy," and unfold it. He can ſhew you which paragraphs are of greateſt importance, and which are of leſs moment. He can teach his hearers what authors, or what parts of an author, are beſt

worth reading on any particular ſubject; and thus ſave his diſciples much time and pain, by ſhortening the labours of their cloſet and private ſtudies. He can ſhew you what were the doctrines of the ancients in a compendium, which perhaps would coſt much labour and the peruſal of many books to attain. He can inform you what new doctrines or ſentiments are riſing in the world, before they come to be public; as well as acquaint you with his own private thoughts, and his own experiments and obſervations, which never were, and perhaps never will be publiſhed to the world, and yet may be very valuable and uſeful.

3. A living inſtructor can convey to our ſenſes thoſe notions with which he would furniſh our minds, when he teaches us natural philoſophy, or moſt parts of mathematical learning. He can make the experiments before our eyes. He can deſcribe figures and diagrams, point to the lines and angles, and make out the demonſtration in a more intelligible manner by ſenſible means, which cannot be done ſo well by mere reading, even though we ſhould have the ſame figures lying in a book before our eyes. A living teacher, therefore, is a moſt neceſſary help in theſe ſtudies.

I might add alſo, that even where the ſubject of diſcourſe is moral, logical, or rhetorical, &c. and which does not directly come under the notice of our ſenſes, a tutor may explain his ideas by ſuch familiar examples, and plain or ſimple ſimilitudes, as ſeldom find place in books and writings.

4. When an inſtructor in his lectures delivers any matter of difficulty, or expreſſes himſelf in ſuch a manner as ſeems obſcure, ſo that you do not take up his ideas clearly or fully, you have opportunity, at leaſt when the lecture is finiſhed, or at other proper ſeaſons, to inquire how ſuch a ſentence ſhould be underſtood, or how ſuch a difficulty may be explained and removed.

If there be permiſſion given to free converſe with the tutor, either in the midſt of the lecture, or rather at the end of it, concerning any doubts or difficulties that occur to the hearer, this brings it very near to converſation or diſcourſe.

IV.

IV. CONVERSATION is the next method of improvement, and it is attended with the following advantages.

1. When we converſe familiarly with a learned friend, we have his own help at hand to explain to us every word and ſentiment that ſeems obſcure in his diſcourſe, and to inform us of his whole meaning, ſo that we are in much leſs danger of miſtaking his ſenſe; whereas in books, whatſoever is really obſcure, may alſo abide always obſcure without remedy, ſince the author is not at hand, that we may inquire his ſenſe.

If we miſtake the meaning of our friend in converſation we are quickly ſet right again; but in reading we many times go on in the ſame miſtake, and are not capable of recovering ourſelves from it. Thence it comes to paſs, that we have ſo many conteſts in all ages about the meaning of ancient authors, and eſpecially the ſacred writers. Happy ſhould we be, could we but converſe with Moſes, Iſaiah, and St Paul, and conſult the prophets and apoſtles, when we meet with a difficult text? But that glorious converſation is reſerved for the ages of future bleſſedneſs.

2. When we are diſcourſing upon any theme with a friend, we may propoſe our doubts and objections againſt his ſentiments, and have them ſolved and anſwered at once.—The difficulties that ariſe in our minds may be removed by one enlightening word of our correſpondent; whereas in reading if a difficulty or queſtion ariſe in our thoughts which the author has not happened to mention, we muſt be content without a preſent anſwer or ſolution of it. Books cannot ſpeak.

3. Not only the doubts which ariſe in the mind upon any ſubject of diſcourſe are eaſily propoſed and ſolved in converſation, but the very difficulties we meet with in books and in our private ſtudies may find a relief by friendly conference. We may pore upon a knotty point in ſolitary meditation many months without a ſolution, becauſe perhaps we have gotten into a wrong tract of thought; and our labour (while we are purſuing a falſe ſcent) is not only uſeleſs and unſucceſsful, but it leads us perhaps into a long train of error for want of being corrected in the firſt ſtep. But if we note

down this difficulty when we read it, we may propoſe it to an ingenious correſpondent when we ſee him; we may be relieved in a moment, and find the difficulty vaniſh: he beholds the object perhaps in a different view, ſets it before us in quite another light, leads us at once into evidence and truth, and that with a delightful ſurpriſe.

4. Converſation calls out into light what has been lodged in all the receſſes and ſecret chambers of the ſoul: by occaſional hints and incidents, it brings old uſeful notions into remembrance; it unfolds and diſplays the hidden treaſures of knowledge with which reading, obſervation and ſtudy had before furniſhed the mind. By mutual diſcourſe the ſoul is awakened and allured to bring forth its hoards of knowledge, and it learns how to render them moſt uſeful to mankind. A man of vaſt reading without converſation, is like a miſer who lives only to himſelf.

5. In free and friendly converſation, our intellectual powers are more animated, and our ſpirits act with a ſuperior vigour in the queſt and purſuit of unknown truths. There is a ſharpneſs and ſagacity of thought that attends converſation, beyond what we find whilſt we are ſhut up reading and muſing in our retirements. Our ſouls may be ſerene in ſolitude, but not ſparkling, though perhaps we are employed in reading the works of the brighteſt writers. Often has it happened in free diſcourſe that new thoughts are ſtrangely ſtruck out, and the ſeeds of truth ſparkle and blaze through the company, which in calm and ſilent reading would never have been excited. By converſation you will both give and receive this benefit; as flints when put into motion and ſtriking againſt each other, produce living fire on both ſides, which would never have riſen from the ſame hard materials in a ſtate of reſt.

6. In generous converſation amongſt ingenious and learned men, we have a great advantage of propoſing our private opinions, and of bringing our own ſentiments to the teſt, and learning in a more compendious and a ſafer way what the world will judge of them, how mankind will receive them, what objections may be raiſed againſt them, what defects there are in our ſcheme,

ſcheme, and how to correct our own miſtakes; which advantages are not ſo eaſy to be obtained by our own private meditations: for the pleaſure we take in our own notions, and the paſſion of ſelf-love, as well as the narrowneſs of our views, tempt us to paſs too favourable an opinion on our own ſchemes; whereas the variety of genius in our ſeveral aſſociates, will give happy notices how our opinions will ſtand in the view of mankind.

7. It is alſo another conſiderable advantage of converſation, that it furniſhes the ſtudent with the knowledge of men and the affairs of life, as reading furniſhes him with book-learning. A man who dwells all his days among books, may have amaſſed together a vaſt heap of notions, but he may be a mere ſcholar, which is a contemptible ſort of character in the world. A hermit who has been ſhut up in his cell in a college, has contracted a ſort of mould and ruſt upon his ſoul, and all his airs of behaviour have a certain awkwardneſs in them; but theſe awkward airs are worn away by degrees in company: the ruſt and the mould are filed and bruſhed off by polite converſation. The ſcholar now becomes a citizen or a gentleman, a neighbour and a friend; he learns how to dreſs his ſentiments in the faireſt colours, as well as to ſet them in the ſtrongeſt light. Thus he brings out his notions with honour, he makes ſome uſe of them in the world, and improves the theory by the practice.

But before we proceed too far in finiſhing a bright character by converſation, we ſhould conſider that ſomething elſe is neceſſary beſides an acquaintance with men and books: and therefore I add,

V. MERE lectures, reading, and converſation, without thinking, are not ſufficient to make a man of knowledge and wiſdom. It is our own thought and reflection, ſtudy and meditation, muſt attend all the other methods of improvement, and perfect them. It carries theſe advantages with it:

1. Though obſervation and inſtruction, reading and converſation, may furniſh us with many ideas of men and things, yet it is our own meditation and the labour of our own thoughts that muſt form our judgment of

things. Our own thoughts ſhould join or disjoin theſe ideas in a propoſition for ourſelves: it is our own mind that muſt judge for ourſelves concerning the agreement or diſagreement of ideas, and form propoſitions of truth out of them. Reading and converſation may acquaint us with many truths and with many arguments to ſupport them, but it is our own ſtudy and reaſoning that muſt determine whether theſe propoſitions are true, and whether theſe arguments are juſt and ſolid.

It is confeſt there are a thouſand things which our eyes have not ſeen, and which would never come within the reach of our perſonal and immediate knowledge and obſervation, becauſe of the diſtance of times and places: theſe muſt be known by conſulting other perſons; and that is done either in their writings or in their diſcourſes. But after all, let this be a fixed point with us, that it is our own reflection and judgment muſt determine how far we ſhould receive that which books or men inform us of, and how far they are worthy of our aſſent and credit.

It is meditation and ſtudy that transfers and conveys the notions and ſentiments of others to ourſelves, ſo as to make them properly our own. It is our own judgment upon them as well as our memory of them, that makes them become our own property. It does as it were concoct our intellectual food, and turns it into a part of ourſelves: juſt as a man may call his limbs and his fleſh his own, whether he borrowed the materials from the ox or the ſheep, from the lark or the lobſter; whether he derived it from corn or milk, the fruits of the trees, or the herbs and roots of the earth; it is all now become one ſubſtance with himſelf, and he wields and manages theſe muſcles and limbs for his own proper purpoſes, which once were the ſubſtance of other animals or vegetables; that very ſubſtance which laſt week was grazing in the field or ſwimming in the ſea, waving in the milk-pail, or growing in the garden, is now become part of the man.

3. By ſtudy and meditation we improve the hints that we have acquired by obſervation, converſation, and reading; we take more time in thinking, and by the labour of the mind we penetrate deeper into the themes

of

of knowledge, and carry our thoughts ſometimes much farther on many ſubjects, than we ever met with either in the books of the dead or diſcourſes of the living. It is our own reaſoning that draws out one truth from another, and forms a whole ſcheme of ſcience from a few hints which we borrowed elſewhere.

By a ſurvey of theſe things we may juſtly conclude, that he who ſpends all his time in hearing lectures, or poring upon books, without obſervation, meditation, or converſe, will have but a mere hiſtorical knowledge of learning, and be able only to tell what others have known or ſaid on the ſubject: he that lets all his time flow away in converſation, without due obſervation, reading, or ſtudy, will gain but a ſlight and ſuperficial knowledge, which will be in danger of vaniſhing with the voice of the ſpeaker: and he that confines himſelf merely to his cloſet and his own narrow obſervation of things, and is taught only by his own ſolitary thoughts, without inſtruction by lectures, reading, or free converſation, will be in danger of a narrow ſpirit, a vain conceit of himſelf, and an unreaſonable contempt of others; and after all, he will obtain but a very limited and imperfect view and knowledge of things, and he will ſeldom learn how to make that knowledge uſeful.

Theſe five methods of improvement ſhould be purſued jointly, and go hand in hand, where our circumſtances are ſo happy as to find opportunity and conveniency to enjoy them all: though I muſt give my opinion, that two of them, viz. reading and meditation, ſhould employ much more of our time than public lectures, or converſation and diſcourſe. As for obſervation, we may be always acquiring knowledge that way, whether we are alone or in company.

But it will be for our further improvement, if we go over all theſe five methods of obtaining knowledge more diſtinctly and more at large, and ſee what ſpecial advances in uſeful ſcience we may draw from them all.

CHAP. III.

Rules relating to Obſervation.

THOUGH obſervation in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, and as it is diſtinguiſhed from meditation and ſtudy, is the firſt means of improvement, and in its ſtricteſt ſenſe does not include in it any reaſonings of the mind upon the things which we obſerve, or inferences drawn from them; yet the motions of the mind are ſo exceeding ſwift, that it is hardly poſſible for a thinking man to gain experiences or obſervations, without making ſome ſecret and ſhort reflections upon them: and therefore in giving a few directions concerning this method of improvement, I ſhall not ſo narrowly confine myſelf to the firſt mere impreſſion of objects on the mind by obſervation; but include alſo ſome hints which relate to the firſt, moſt eaſy, and obvious reflections or reaſonings which ariſe from them.

I. LET the enlargement of your knowledge be one conſtant view and deſign in life; ſince there is no time or place, no tranſactions, occurrences, or engagements in life, which exclude us from this method of improving the mind. When we are alone, even in darkneſs and ſilence, we may converſe with our own hearts, obſerve the working of our own ſpirits, and reflect upon the inward motions of our own paſſions in ſome of the lateſt occurrences in life; we may acquaint ourſelves with the powers and properties, the tendencies and inclinations both of body and ſpirit, and gain a more intimate knowledge of ourſelves. When we are in company, we may diſcover ſomething more of human nature, of human paſſions and follies, and of human affairs, vices, and virtues, by converſing with mankind, and obſerving their conduct. Nor is there any thing more valuable than the knowledge of ourſelves, and the knowledge of men, except it be the knowledge of God who made us, and our relation to him as our Governor.

When we are in the houſe or the city, whereſoever we turn our eyes, we ſee the works of men; when we are abroad in the country, we behold more of the works of

of God. The ſkies and the ground above and beneath us, and the animal and vegetable world round about us, may entertain our obſervation with ten thouſand varieties.

Endeavour therefore to derive ſome inſtruction or improvement of the mind from every thing which you ſee or hear, from every thing which occurs in human life, from every thing within you or without you.

Fetch down ſome knowledge from the clouds, the ſtars, the ſun, the moon, and the revolutions of all the planets, dig and draw up ſome valuable meditations from the depths of the earth, and ſearch them through the vaſt oceans of water: extract ſome intellectual improvements from the minerals and metals; from the wonders of nature among the vegetables, and herbs, trees, and flowers. Learn ſome leſſons from the birds, and the beaſts, and the meaneſt inſect. Read the wiſdom of God and his admirable contrivance in them all. Read his almighty power, his rich and various goodneſs, in all the works of his hands.

From the day and the night, the hours and the flying minutes learn a wiſe improvement of time, and be watchful to ſeize every opportunity to increaſe in knowledge.

From the viciſſitudes and revolutions of nations and families, and from the various occurrences of the world, learn the inſtability of mortal affairs, the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death. From a coffin and a funeral, learn to meditate upon your own departure.

From the vices and follies of others, obſerve what is hateful in them; conſider how ſuch a practice looks in another perſon, and remember that it looks as ill or worſe in yourſelf. From the virtues of others, learn ſomething worthy of your imitation.

From the deformity, the diſtreſs, or calamity of others, derive leſſons of thankfulneſs to God, and hymns of grateful praiſe to your Creator, Governor, and Benefactor, who has formed you in a better mould, and guarded you from thoſe evils. Learn alſo the ſacred leſſon of contentment in your own eſtate, and compaſſion to your neighbour under his miſeries.

From

From your natural powers, ſenſations, judgment, memory, hands, feet, &c. make this inference, that they were not given you for nothing, but for ſome uſeful employment to the honour of your Maker, and for the good of your fellow creatures, as well as for your own beſt intereſt and final happineſs.

From the ſorrows, the pains, the ſickneſſes, and ſufferings that attend you, learn the evil of ſin, and the imperfection of your preſent ſtate. From your own ſins and follies learn the patience of God toward you, and the practice of humility toward God and man.

Thus from every appearance in nature, and from every occurrence of life, you may derive natural, moral, and religious obſervations to entertain your minds, as well as rules of conduct in the affairs relating to this life, and that which is to come.

II. In order to furniſh the mind with a rich variety of ideas, the laudable curioſity of young people ſhould be indulged and gratified rather than diſcouraged. It is a very hopeful ſign in young perſons, to ſee them curious in obſerving, and inquiſitive in ſearching into the greateſt part of things that occur; nor ſhould ſuch an inquiring temper be frowned into ſilence, nor be rigorouſly reſtrained, but ſhould rather be ſatisfied by proper anſwers given to all thoſe queries.

For this reaſon alſo, where time and fortune allow it, young people ſhould be led into company at proper ſeaſons, ſhould be carried abroad to ſee the fields, and the woods, and the rivers, the buildings, towns, and cities diſtant from their own dwelling; they ſhould be entertained with the ſight of ſtrange birds, beaſts, fiſhes, inſects; vegetables, and productions both of nature and art of every kind, whether they are the products of their own or foreign nations: and in due time, where Providence gives opportunity, they may travel under a wiſe inſpector or tutor to different parts of the world for the ſame end, that they may bring home treaſures of uſeful knowledge.

III. Among all theſe obſervations, write down what is more remarkable and uncommon: reſerve theſe remarks in ſtore for proper occaſions, and at proper ſeaſons take a review of them. Such a practice will

will give you a habit of useful thinking: this will secure the workings of your soul from running to waste, and by this means even your looser moments will turn to happy account both here and hereafter.

And whatever useful observations have been made, let them be at least some part of the subject of your conversation among your friends at next meeting.

Let the circumstances or situations of life be what or where they will, a man should never neglect this improvement which may be derived from observation. Let him travel into the East or West Indies, and fulfil the duties of the military or the mercantile life there; let him rove through the earth or the seas for his own humour as a traveller, or pursue his diversions in what part of the world he pleases as a gentleman; let prosperous or adverse fortune call him to the most distant parts of the globe; still let him carry on his knowledge and the improvement of his soul by wise observations. In due time, by this means he may render himself some way useful to the societies of mankind.

THEOBALDINO, in his younger years, visited the forests of Norway on the account of trade and timber, and besides his proper observations of the growth of trees on those northern mountains, he learnt there was a sort of people called Finns, in those confines which border upon Sweden, whose habitation is in the woods: and he lived afterwards to give a good account of them, and some of their customs, to the Royal Society for the improvement of natural knowledge. PETROLI was taken captive into Turkey in his youth, and travelled with his master in their holy pilgrimage to Mecca, whereby he became more intelligent in the forms, ceremonies, and fooleries of the Mahometan worship, than perhaps ever any Briton knew before: and by his manuscripts we are more acquainted in this last century with the Turkish sacreds than any one had ever informed us.

IV. Let us keep our minds as free as possible from passions and prejudices, for those will give a wrong turn to our observations both on persons and things. The eyes of a man in the jaundice make yellow observations on every thing; and the soul tinctured with any passion

paſſion or prejudice diffuſes a falſe colour over the real appearances of things, and diſguiſes many of the common occurrences of life: it never beholds things in a true light, nor ſuffers them to appear as they are. Whenſoever therefore you would make proper obſervations, let ſelf, with all its influences, ſtand aſide as far as poſſible; abſtract your own intereſt and your own concern from them, and bid all friendſhips and enmities ſtand aloof and keep out of the way, in the obſervations that you make relating to perſons and things.

If this rule were well obeyed, we ſhould be much better guarded againſt thoſe common pieces of miſconduct in the obſervations of men, viz. the falſe judgments of pride and envy. How ready is envy to mingle with the notices which we take of other perſons? How often is mankind prone to put an ill ſenſe upon the actions of their neighbours, to take a ſurvey of them in an evil poſition, and in an unhappy light? And by this means we form a worſe opinion of our neighbours than they deſerve; while at the ſame time pride and ſelf-flattery tempt us to make unjuſt obſervations on ourſelves in our own favour. In all the favourable judgments we paſs concerning ourſelves, we ſhould allow a little abatement on this account.

V. In making your obſervations on perſons, take care of indulging that busy curioſity which is ever inquiring into private and domeſtic affairs, with an endleſs itch of learning the ſecret hiſtory of families. It is but ſeldom that ſuch a prying curioſity attains any valuable ends; it often begets ſuſpicions, jealouſies, and diſturbances in houſeholds, and it is a frequent temptation to perſons to defame their neighbours. Some perſons cannot help telling what they know; a buſy body is moſt liable to become a tatler upon every occaſion.

VI. Let your obſervations, even of perſons and their conduct, be chiefly deſigned in order to lead you to a better acquaintance with things, particularly with human nature; and to inform you what to imitate and what to avoid, rather than to furniſh out matter for the evil paſſions of the mind, or the impertinencies of diſcourſe, and reproaches of the tongue.

VII.

VII. Though it may be proper ſometimes to make your obſervations concerning perſons as well as things, the ſubject of your diſcourſe in learned or uſeful converſation; yet what remarks you make on particular perſons, eſpecially to their diſadvantage, ſhould for the moſt part lie hid in your own breaſt, till ſome juſt and apparent occaſion, ſome neceſſary call of Providence, leads you to ſpeak to them.

If the character or conduct which you obſerve be greatly culpable, it ſhould ſo much the leſs be publiſhed. You may treaſure up ſuch remarks of the follies, indecencies, or vices of your neighbours, as may be a conſtant guard againſt your practice of the ſame, without expoſing the reputation of your neighbour on that account. It is a good old rule, that our converſation ſhould rather be laid out on things than on perſons; and this rule ſhould generally be obſerved, unleſs names be concealed, whereſoever the faults or follies of mankind are our preſent theme.

Our late archbiſhop Tillotſon has written a ſmall but excellent diſcourſe on evil ſpeaking, wherein he admirably explains, limits, and applies that general apoſtolic precept, Speak evil of no man, *Tit.* iii. 2.

VIII. Be not too haſty to erect general theories from a few particular obſervations, appearances, or experiments. This is what the logicians call a falſe induction. When general obſervations are drawn from ſo many particulars as to become certain and indubitable, theſe are jewels of knowledge, comprehending great treaſure in a little room; but they are therefore to be made with the greater care and caution, leſt errors become large and diffuſive, if we ſhould miſtake in theſe general notions.

A haſty determination of ſome univerſal principles, without a due ſurvey of all the particular caſes which may be included in them, is the way to lay a trap for our own underſtandings in their purſuit of any ſubject, and we ſhall often be taken captives into miſtake and falſehood. Niveo in his youth obſerved, that on three Chriſtmas-days together there fell a good quantity of ſnow, and now he hath writ it down in his almanack as part of his wiſe remarks on the weather, that it will alway

always ſhow at Chriſtmas. Euron, a young lad, took notice ten times that there was a ſharp froſt when the wind was in the north-eaſt, therefore in the middle of laſt July he almoſt expected it ſhould freeze, becauſe the weather cocks ſhewed him a north-eaſt wind: and he was ſtill more diſappointed when he found it a very ſultry ſeaſon. It is the ſame haſty judgment that hath thrown ſcandal on a whole nation for the ſake of ſome culpable characters belonging to ſeveral particular natives of that country: whereas all the Frenchmen are not gay and airy; all the Italians are not jealous and revengeful; nor are all the Engliſh over-run with the ſpleen.

CHAP. VI.

Of Books and Reading.

I.

THE world is full of books, but there are multitudes which are ſo ill written they were never worth any man's reading; and there are thouſands more which may be good in their kind, yet are worth nothing when the month, or year, or occaſion is paſt for which they were written. Others may be valuable in themſelves, for ſome ſpecial purpoſe or in ſome peculiar ſcience, but are not fit to be peruſed by any but thoſe who are engaged in that particular ſcience or buſineſs. To what uſe is it for a divine or phyſician, or a tradeſman, to read over the huge volumes of reports of judged caſes in the law? or for a lawyer to learn Hebrew and read the Rabbins? It is of vaſt advantage for improvement of knowledge and ſaving time, for a young man to have the moſt proper books for his reading recommended by a judicious friend.

II. BOOKS of importance of any kind, and eſpecially complete treatiſes on any ſubject, ſhould be firſt read in a more general and curſory manner, to learn a little what the treatiſe promiſes, and what you may expect from the writer's manner and ſkill. And for this end I would adviſe always that the preface be read and a ſurvey taken

taken of the table of contents, if there be one, before the firſt ſurvey of the book. By this means you will not only be better fitted to give the book the firſt reading, but you will be much aſſiſted in your ſecond peruſal of it, which ſhould be done with greater attention and deliberation, and you will learn with more eaſe and readineſs what the author pretends to teach. In your reading, mark what is new or unknown to you before, and review thoſe chapters, pages, or paragraphs. Unleſs a reader has an uncommon and moſt retentive memory, I may venture to affirm, that there is ſcarce any book or chapter worth reading once that is not worthy of a ſecond peruſal. At leaſt take a careful review of all the lines or paragraphs which you marked, and make a recollection of the ſections which you thought truly valuable.

There is another reaſon alſo why I would chuſe to take a ſuperficial and curſory ſurvey of a book, before I ſit down to read it, and dwell upon it with ſtudious attention: and that is, there may be ſeveral difficulties in it which we cannot eaſily underſtand and conquer at the firſt reading, for want of a fuller comprehenſion of the author's whole ſcheme. And therefore, in ſuch treatiſes, we ſhould not ſtay till we maſter every difficulty at the firſt peruſal; for perhaps many of theſe would appear to be ſolved when we have proceeded farther in that book, or would vaniſh of themſelves upon a ſecond reading.

What we cannot reach and penetrate at firſt, may be noted down as matter of after conſideration and inquiry, if the pages that follow do not happen to ſtrike a complete light on thoſe which went before.

III. If three or four perſons agree to read the ſame book, and each bring his own remarks upon it at ſome ſet hours appointed for converſation, and they communicate mutually their ſentiments on the ſubject, and debate about it in a friendly manner, this practice will render the reading any author more abundantly beneficial to every one of them.

IV. If ſeveral perſons engaged in the ſame ſtudy take into their hands diſtinct treatiſes on one ſubject, and appoint a ſeaſon of communication once a-week, they may

inform each other in a brief manner concerning the ſenſe, ſentiments, and method of thoſe ſeveral authors, and thereby promote each other's improvement, either by recommending the peruſal of the ſame book to their companions, or perhaps by ſatisfying their inquiries concerning it by converſation, without every one's peruſing it.

V. Remember that your buſineſs in reading or in converſation, eſpecially on ſubjects of natural, moral, or divine ſcience, is not merely to know the opinion of the author or ſpeaker, for this is but the mere knowledge of hiſtory; but your chief buſineſs is to conſider whether their opinions are right or no, and to improve your own ſolid knowledge of that ſubject by meditation on the themes of their writing or diſcourſe. Deal freely with every author you read, and yield up your aſſent only to evidence and juſt reaſoning on the ſubject.

Here I would be underſtood to ſpeak only of human authors, and not of the ſacred and inſpired writings. In theſe our buſineſs indeed is only to find out the ſenſe, and underſtand the true meaning of the paragraph and page, and our aſſent then is bound to follow when we are before ſatisfied that the writing is divine. Yet I might add alſo, that even this is juſt reaſoning, and this is ſufficient evidence to demand our aſſent.

But in the compoſures of men, remember you are a man as well as they; and it is not their reaſon but your own that is given to guide you when you arrive at years of diſcretion, of manly age and judgment.

VI. Let this therefore be your practice, eſpecially after you have gone through one courſe of any ſcience in your academical ſtudies: if a writer on that ſubject maintains the ſame ſentiments as you do, yet if he does not explain his ideas or prove his poſitions well, mark the faults or defects, and endeavour to do it better, either in the margin of your book, or rather in ſome papers of your own, or at leaſt let it be done in your private meditations. As for inſtance:

Where the author is obſcure, enlighten him: where he is imperfect, ſupply his deficiences: where he is too brief and conciſe, amplify a little, and ſet his notions in a fairer view: where he is redundant, mark thoſe paragraphs

graphs to be retrenched: when he trifles and grows impertinent, abandon thoſe paſſages or pages: where he argues, obſerve whether his reaſons be concluſive: if the concluſion be true, and yet the argument weak, endeavour to confirm it by better proofs: where he derives or infers any propoſitions darkly or doubtfully, make the juſtice of the inference appear, and add further inferences or corollaries, if ſuch occur to your mind: where you ſuppoſe he is in a miſtake, propoſe your objections and correct his ſentiments: what he writes ſo well as to approve itſelf to your judgment, both as juſt and uſeful, treaſure it up in your memory, and count it a part of your intellectual gains.

Note, Many of theſe ſame directions which I have now given may be practiſed with regard to converſation, as well as reading, in order to render it uſeful in the moſt extenſive and laſting manner.

VII. Other things alſo of the like nature may be uſefully practiſed with regard to the authors which you read, *viz* If the method of a book be irregular, reduce it into form by a little analyſis of your own, or by hints in the margin: if thoſe things are heaped together which ſhould be ſeparated, you may wiſely diſtinguiſh and divide them. If ſeveral things relating to the ſame ſubject are ſcattered up and down ſeparately through the treatiſe, you may bring them all to one view by references; or if the matter of a book be really valuable and deſerving, you may throw it into a better method, reduce it to a more logical ſcheme, or abridge it into a leſſer form; all theſe practices will have a tendency both to advance your ſkill in logic and method, to improve your judgement in general, and to give you a fuller ſurvey of that ſubject in particular. When you have finiſhed the treatiſe with all your obſervations upon it, recollect and determine what real improvements you have made by reading that author.

VIII. If a book has no index to it, or good table of contents, it is very uſeful to make one as you are reading it: not with that exactneſs as to include the ſenſe of every page and paragraph, which ſhould be done if you deſigned to print it; but it is ſufficient in your index to take notice only of thoſe parts of the book

which are new to you, or which you think well written, and well worthy of your remembrance or review.

Shall I be so free as to assure my younger friends, from my own experience, that these methods of reading will cost some pains in the first years of your study, and especially in the first authors which you peruse in any science, or on any particular subject: but the profit will richly compensate the pains. And in the following years of life, after you have read a few valuable books on any special subject in this manner, it will be very easy to read others of the same kind, because you will not usually find very much new matter in them which you have not already examined.

IX. If the writer be remarkable for any peculiar excellencies or defects in his style or manner of writing, make just observations upon this also; and whatever ornaments you find there, or whatsoever blemishes occur in the language or manner of the writer, you may make just remarks upon them. And remember, that one book read over in this manner, with all this laborious meditation, will tend more to enrich your understanding than the skimming over the surface of twenty authors.

X. By perusing books in the manner I have described, you will make all your reading subservient not only to the enlargement of your treasures of knowledge, but also to the improvement of your reasoning powers.

There are many who read with constancy and diligence, and yet make no advances in true knowledge by it. They are delighted with the notions which they read or hear, as they would be with stories that are told, but they do not weigh them in their minds as in a just balance, in order to determine their truth or falsehood; they make no observations upon them, or inferences from them. Perhaps their eye slides over the pages, or the words slide over their ears, and vanish like a rhapsody of evening tales, or the shadows of a cloud flying over a green field in a summer's day.

Or if they review them sufficiently to fix them in their remembrance, it is merely with a design to tell the tale over again, and shew what men of learning they are. Thus they dream out their days in a course of reading without real advantage. As a man may be eating

eating all day, and for want of digeſtion is never nouriſhed; ſo theſe endleſs readers may cram themſelves in vain with intellectual food, and without real improvement of their minds, for want of digeſting it by proper reflections.

XI. Be diligent therefore in obſerving theſe directions. Enter into the ſenſe and argument of the authors you read, examine all their proofs, and then judge of the truth or falſehood of their opinions; and thereby you ſhall not only gain a rich increaſe of your underſtandings by thoſe truths which the author teaches, when you ſee them well ſupported, but you ſhall acquire alſo by degrees an habit of judging juſtly, and of reaſoning well, in imitation of the good writer whoſe works you peruſe.

This is laborious indeed, and the mind is backward to undergo the fatigue of weighing every argument and tracing every thing to its original. It is much leſs labour to take all things upon truſt; believing is much eaſier than arguing. But when Studentio had once perſuaded his mind to tie itſelf down to this method which I have preſcribed, he ſenſibly gained an admirable facility to read, and judge of what he read, by his daily practice of it, and the man made large advances in the purſuit of truth: while Plumbinus and Plumeo made leſs progreſs in knowledge, though they had read over more folios. Plumeo ſkimmed over the pages like a ſwallow over the flowery meads in May. Plumbinus read every line and ſyllable, but did not give himſelf the trouble of thinking and judging about them. They both could boaſt in company of their great reading, for they new more titles and pages than Studentio, but were far leſs acquainted with ſcience.

I confeſs thoſe whoſe reading is deſigned only to fit them for much talk and little knowledge, may content themſelves to run over their authors in ſuch a ſudden and trifling way; they may devour libraries in this manner, yet be poor reaſoners at laſt, and have no ſolid wiſdom or true learning. The traveller who walks on fair and ſoftly in a courſe that points right, and examines every turning before he ventures upon it, will come ſooner and ſafer to his journey's end, than

he who runs through every lane he meets, though he gallop full ſpeed all the day. The man of much reading and a large retentive memory, but without meditation, may become, in the ſenſe of the world, a knowing man; and if he converſes much with the ancients, he may attain the fame of learning too: but he ſpends his days afar off from wiſdom and true judgement, and poſſeſſes very little of the ſubſtantial riches of the mind.

XII. Never apply yourſelves to read any human author with a determination before-hand either for or againſt him, or with a ſettled reſolution to believe or diſbelieve, to confirm or to oppoſe whatſoever he ſaith; but always read with a deſign to lay your mind open to truth, and to embrace it whereſoever you find it, as well as to reject every falſehood, though it appear under ever ſo fair a diſguiſe. How unhappy are thoſe men who ſeldom take an author into their hands, but they have determined before they begin, whether they will like or diſlike him! They have got ſome notion of his name, his character, his party, or his principles, by general converſation, or perhaps by ſome ſlight view of a few pages; and having all their own opinions adjuſted before-hand, they read all that he writes with a prepoſſeſſion either for or againſt him. Unhappy thoſe who hunt and purvey for a party, and ſcrape together out of every author, all thoſe things, and thoſe only, which favour their own tenets, while they deſpiſe and neglect all the reſt!

XIII. Yet take this caution. I would not be underſtood here, as though I perſuaded a perſon to live without any ſettled principles at all, by which to judge of men, and books, and things: or that I would keep a man always doubting about his foundations. The chief things that I deſign in this advice, are theſe three.

1. That after our moſt neceſſary and important principles of ſcience, prudence, and religion, are ſettled upon good grounds, with regard to our preſent conduct and our future hopes, we ſhould read with a juſt freedom of thought all thoſe books which treat of ſuch ſubjects as may admit of doubt and reaſonable diſpute. Nor ſhould any of our opinions be ſo reſolved upon,

eſpecially

eſpecially in younger years, as never to hear or to bear an oppoſition to them.

2. When we peruſe thoſe authors who defend our own ſettled ſentiments, we ſhould not take all their arguings for juſt and ſolid; but we ſhould make a wiſe diſtinction betwixt the corn and the chaff, between ſolid reaſoning and the mere ſuperficial colours of it; nor ſhould we readily ſwallow down all their leſſer opinions becauſe we agree with them in the greater.

3. That when we read thoſe authors which oppoſe our moſt certain and eſtabliſhed principles, we ſhould be ready to receive any informations from them in other points, and not abandon at once every thing they ſay, though we are well fixed in oppoſition to their main point of arguing.

—— *Fas eſt, et ab hoſte doceri.* VIRG.

Seize upon truth where-e'r 'tis found,
Amongſt your friends, amongſt your foes,
On Chriſtian *or on* Heathen *ground;*
The flower's divine where-e'er it grows:
Neglect the prickles, and aſſume the roſe.

XIV. WHAT I have ſaid hitherto on this ſubject, relating to books and reading, muſt be chiefly underſtood of that ſort of books, and thoſe hours of our reading and ſtudy, whereby we deſign to improve the intellectual powers of the mind with natural, moral, or divine knowledge. As for thoſe treatiſes which are written to direct or to enforce and perſuade our practice, there is one thing further neceſſary; and that is, that when our conſciences are convinced that theſe rules of prudence or duty belong to us, and require our conformity to them, we ſhould then call ourſelves to account, and inquire ſeriouſly whether we have put them in practice or no; we ſhould dwell upon the arguments, and impreſs the motives and methods of perſuaſion upon our own hearts, till we feel the force and power of them inclining us to the practice of the things which are there recommended.

If folly or vice be repreſented in its open colours, or its ſecrets diſguiſes, let us ſearch our hearts, and review our lives, and inquire how far we are criminal; nor ſhould we ever think we have done with the treatiſe till we feel ourſelves in ſorrow for our paſt miſconduct, and aſpiring after a victory over thoſe vices, or till we find a cure of thoſe follies begun to be wrought upon our ſouls.

In all our ſtudies and purſuits of knowledge, let us remember that virtue and vice, ſin and holineſs, and the conformation of our hearts and lives to the duties of true religion and morality, are things of far more conſequence than all the furniture of our underſtandings, and the richeſt treaſures of mere ſpeculative knowledge; and that becauſe they have a more immediate and effectual influence upon our eternal felicity or eternal ſorrow.

XV. THERE is yet another ſort of books, of which it is proper I ſhould ſay ſomething while I am treating on this ſubject; and theſe are, hiſtory, poeſy, travels, books of diverſion or amuſement; among which we may reckon alſo, little common pamphlets, newſpapers, or ſuch like: for many of theſe I confeſs once reading may be ſufficient, where there is a tolerable good memory.

Or when ſeveral perſons are in company, and one reads to the reſt ſuch ſort of writings, once hearing may be ſufficient, provided that every one be ſo attentive, and ſo free as to make their occaſional remarks on ſuch lines or ſentences, ſuch periods or paragraphs, as in their opinion deſerve it. Now all thoſe paragraphs or ſentiments deſerve a remark, which are new and uncommon, are noble and excellent for the matter of them, are ſtrong and convincing for the argument contained in them, are beautiful and elegant for the language or the manner, or any way worthy of a ſecond rehearſal; and at the requeſt of any of the company let thoſe paragraphs be read over again.

Such parts alſo of theſe writings as may happen to be remarkably ſtupid or ſilly, falſe or miſtaken, ſhould become ſubjects of an occaſional criticiſm, made by ſome of the company; and this may give occaſion to the

the repetition of them for confirmation of the cenſure, for amuſement or diverſion.

Still let it be remembered, that where the hiſtorical narration is of conſiderable moment, where the poeſy, oratory, &c. ſhine with ſome degrees of perfection and glory, a ſingle reading is neither ſufficient to ſatisfy a mind that has a true taſte of this ſort of writings; nor can we make the fulleſt and beſt improvement of them without proper reviews, and that in our retirement as well as in company. Who is there that has any gout for polite writings that would be ſufficiently ſatisfied with hearing the beautiful pages of Steel or Addiſon, the admirable deſcriptions of Virgil or Milton, or ſome of the fineſt poems of Pope, Young, or Dryden, once read over to them, and then lay them by for ever?

XVI. Among theſe writings of the latter kind we may juſtly reckon ſhort miſcellaneous eſſays on all manner of ſubjects: ſuch as the Occaſional Papers, the Tatlers, the Spectators, and ſome other books that have been compiled out of the weekly or daily products of the preſs, wherein are contained a great number of bright thoughts, ingenious remarks, and admirable obſervations, which have had a conſiderable ſhare in furniſhing the preſent age with knowledge and politeneſs.

I wiſh every paper among theſe writings could have been recommended both as innocent and uſeful. I wiſh every unſeemly idea and wanton expreſſion had been baniſhed from amongſt them, and every trifling page had been excluded from the company of the reſt when they had been bound up in volumes. But it is not to be expected, in ſo imperfect a ſtate, that every page or piece of ſuch mixed public papers ſhould be entirely blameleſs and laudable. Yet in the main it muſt be confeſſed, there is ſo much virtue, prudence, ingenuity, and goodneſs in them, eſpecially in eight volumes of Spectators, there is ſuch a reverence of things ſacred, ſo many valuable remarks for our conduct in life, that they are not improper to lie in parlours, or ſummer-houſes, or places of uſual reſidence, to entertain our thoughts in any moments of leiſure, or vacant hours that occur. There is ſuch a diſcovery of the follies, iniquities, and faſhionable vices of mankind contained

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in them, that we may learn much of the humours and madneſſes of the age and the public world, in our own ſolitary retirement, without the danger of frequenting vicious company, or receiving the mortal infection.

XVII. Among other books which are proper and requiſite, in order to improve our knowledge in general, or our acquaintance with any particular ſcience, it is neceſſary that we ſhould be furniſhed with Vocabularies and Dictionaries of ſeveral ſorts, viz. Of common words, idioms, and phraſes, in order to explain their ſenſe; of technical words or the terms of art, to ſhew their uſe in arts and ſciences; of names of men, countries, towns, rivers, &c. which are called hiſtorical and geographical dictionaries, &c. Theſe are to be conſulted and uſed upon every occaſion; and never let an unknown word paſs in your reading, without ſeeking for its ſenſe and meaning in ſome of theſe writers.

If ſuch books are not at hand, you muſt ſupply the want of them, as well as you can, by conſulting ſuch as can inform you: and it is uſeful to note down the matters of doubt and inquiry in ſome pocket-book, and take the firſt opportunity to get them reſolved, either by perſons or books, when we meet with them.

XVIII. Be not ſatisfied with a mere knowledge of the beſt authors that treat of any ſubject, inſtead of acquainting yourſelves thoroughly with the ſubject itſelf. There is many a young ſtudent that is fond of enlarging his knowledge of books, and he contents himſelf with the notice he has of their title-page, which is the attainment of a bookſeller rather than a ſcholar. Such perſons are under a great temptation to practiſe theſe two follies. (1.) To heap up a great number of books at greater expence than moſt of them can bear, and to furniſh their libraries infinitely better than their underſtandings. And (2.) when they have got ſuch rich treaſures of knowledge upon their ſhelves, they imagine themſelves men of learning, and take a pride in talking of the names of famous authors, and the ſubjects of which they treat, without any real improvement of their own minds in true ſcience or wiſdom. At beſt their learning reaches no farther than the indexes and tables

of

of contents, while they know not how to judge or reaſon concerning the matters contained in thoſe authors.

And indeed how many volumes of learning ſoever a man poſſeſſes, he is ſtill deplorably poor in his underſtanding, till he has made theſe ſeveral parts of learning his own property, by reading and reaſoning, by judging for himſelf, and remembering what he has read.

CHAP. V.

Judgment of Books.

I.

IF we would form a judgment of a book which we have not ſeen before, the firſt thing that offers is the title-page, and we may ſometimes gueſs a little at the import and deſign of a book thereby: though it muſt be confeſt, that titles are often deceitful, and promiſe more than the book performs. The author's name, if it be known in the world, may help us to conjecture at the performance a little more, and lead us to gueſs in what manner it is done. A peruſal of the preface or introduction (which I before recommended) may further aſſiſt our judgment; and if there be an index of the contents, it will give us ſtill ſome advancing light.

If we have not leiſure or inclination to read over the book itſelf regularly, then by the titles of chapters we may be directed to peruſe ſeveral particular chapters or ſections, and obſerve whether there be any thing valuable or important in them. We ſhall find hereby whether the author explains his ideas clearly, whether he reaſons ſtrongly, whether he methodizes well, whether his thoughts and ſenſe be manly and his manner polite; or, on the other hand, whether he be obſcure, weak, trifling, and confuſed: or, finally, whether the matter may not be ſolid and ſubſtantial, though the manner or ſtyle be rude and diſagreeable.

II. By having run through ſeveral chapters and ſections in this manner, we may generally judge whether

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the treatiſe be worth a complete peruſal or no. But if by ſuch an occaſional ſurvey of ſome chapters, our expectation be utterly diſcouraged, we may well lay aſide that book; for there is great probability he can be but an indifferent writer on that ſubject, if he affords but one prize to divers blanks, and it may be ſome downright blots too. The piece can hardly be valuable if in ſeven or eight chapters which we peruſe there be but little truth, evidence, force of reaſoning, beauty, and ingenuity of thought, &c. mingled with much error, ignorance, impertinence, dulneſs, mean and common thoughts, inaccuracy, ſophiſtry, railing, &c. Life is too ſhort, and time is too precious, to read every new book quite over, in order to find that it is not worth the reading.

III. THERE are ſome general miſtakes which perſons are frequently guilty of in paſſing a judgment on the books which they read.

One is this; when a treatiſe is written but tolerably well, we are ready to paſs a favourable judgment of it, and ſometimes to exalt its character far beyond its merit, if it agree with our own principles, and ſupport the opinions of our party. On the other hand, if the author be of different ſentiments, and eſpouſe contrary principles, we can find neither wit nor reaſon, good ſenſe nor good language in it. Whereas, alas! if our opinions of things were certain and infallible truth, yet a ſilly author may draw his pen in the defence of them, and he may attack even groſs errors with feeble and ridiculous arguments. Truth in this world is not always attended and ſupported by the wiſeſt and ſafeſt methods; and error, though it can never be maintained by juſt reaſoning, yet may be artfully covered and defended: an ingenious writer may put excellent colours upon his own miſtakes. Some Socinians, who deny the attonement of Chriſt, have written well, and with much appearance of argument for their own unſcriptural ſentiments, and ſome writers for the Trinity and ſatisfaction of Chriſt, have expoſed themſelves and the ſacred doctrine, by their feeble and fooliſh manner of handling it. Books are never to be judged of merely by their ſubject, or the opinion they repreſent, but by the juſt-

neſs

neſs of their ſentiments, the beauty of their manner, the force of their expreſſion, or the ſtrength of reaſon, and the weight of juſt and proper argument which appears in them.

But this folly and weakneſs of trifling inſtead of arguing does not happen to fall only to the ſhare of Chriſtian writers: there are ſome who have taken the pen in hand to ſupport the Deiſtical or Antichriſtian ſcheme of our days, who make big pretences to reaſon upon all occaſions, but ſeem to have left it quite behind them when they are jeſting with the Bible, and grinning at the books which we call ſacred. Some of theſe performances would ſcarce have been thought tolerable, if they had not aſſaulted the Chriſtian faith, though they are now grown up to a place amongſt the admired pens. I much queſtion whether ſeveral of the rhapſodies called the Characteriſtics would ever have ſurvived the firſt edition, if they had not diſcovered ſo ſtrong a tincture of infidelity, and now and then caſt out a profane ſneer at our holy religion. I have ſometimes indeed been ready to wonder, how a book in the main ſo looſely written ſhould ever obtain ſo many readers amongſt men of ſenſe. Surely they muſt be conſcious in the peruſal, that ſometimes a patrician may write as idly as a man of plebeian rank, and trifle as much as an old ſchool-man, though it is in another form. I am forced to ſay, there are few books that ever I read, which made any pretences to a great genius, from which I derived ſo little valuable knowledge as from theſe treatiſes. There is indeed amongſt them a lively pertneſs, a parade of literature, and much of what ſome folks now-a-days call politeneſs; but it is hard that we ſhould be bound to admire all the reveries of this author, under the penalty of being unfaſhionable.

IV. Another miſtake which ſome perſons fall into is this. When they read a treatiſe on a ſubject with which they have but little acquaintance, they find almoſt every thing new and ſtrange to them, their underſtandings are greatly entertained and improved by the occurrence of many things which were unknown to them before, they admire the treatiſe, and commend the author at once; whereas if they had but attained

a good degree of ſkill in that ſcience, perhaps they would find that the author had written very poorly, that neither his ſenſe nor his method was juſt and proper, and that he had nothing in him but what was very common or trivial in his diſcourſes on that ſubject.

Hence it comes to paſs, that Cario and Faber, who were both bred up to labour, and unacquainted with the ſciences, ſhall admire one of the weekly papers, or a little pamphlet that talks pertly on ſome critical or learned theme, becauſe the matter is all ſtrange and new to them, and they join to extol the writer to the ſkies; and for the ſame reaſon a young academic ſhall dwell upon a Journal or an Obſervator that treats of trade and politics in a dictatorial ſtyle, and ſhall be laviſh in praiſe of the author. While at the ſame time perſons well ſkilled in thoſe different ſubjects, hear the impertinent tattle with a juſt contempt; for they know how weak and awkward many of thoſe little diminutive diſcourſes are; and that thoſe very papers of ſcience, politics, or trade, which were ſo much admired by the ignorant, are perhaps but very mean performances; though it muſt be alſo confeſſed, there are ſome excellent eſſays in thoſe papers, and that upon ſcience as well as trade.

V. But there is a danger of miſtake in our judgment of books on the other hand alſo: for when we have made ourſelves maſters of any particular theme of knowledge, and ſurveyed it along on all ſides, there is perhaps ſcarce any writer on that ſubject who much entertains and pleaſes us afterwards, becauſe we find little or nothing new in him; and yet in a true judgment, perhaps his ſentiments are moſt proper and juſt, his explications clear, and his reaſonings ſtrong, and all the parts of the diſcourſe are well connected and ſet in a happy light; but we knew moſt of thoſe things before, and therefore they ſtrike us not, and we are in danger of diſcommending them.

Thus the learned and the unlearned have their ſeveral diſtinct dangers and prejudices ready to attend them in their judgment of the writings of men. Theſe which I have mentioned are a ſpecimen of them, and indeed but a mere ſpecimen; for the prejudices that warp

warp our judgment aside from truth are almost infinite and endless.

VI. Yet I cannot forbear to point out two or three more of these follies, that I may attempt something toward the correction of them, or at least to guard others against them.

There are some persons of a forward and lively temper, and who are fond to intermeddle with all appearances of knowledge, will give their judgment on a book as soon as the title of it is mentioned, for they would not willingly seem ignorant of any thing that others know. And especially if they happen to have any superior character or possessions in this world, they fancy they have a right to talk freely upon every thing that stirs or appears, though they have no other pretence to this freedom. Divito is worth forty thousand pounds; Politulus is a fine young gentleman, who sparkles in all the shining things of dress and equipage; Aulinus is a small attendant on a minister of state, and is at court almost every day. These three happened to meet in a visit, where an excellent book of warm and refined devotions lay in the window. What dull stuff is here? said Divito; I never read so much nonsense in one page in my life, nor would I give a shilling for a thousand such treatises. Aulinus, though a courtier, and not used to speak roughly, yet would not allow there was a line of good sense in the book, and pronounced him a madman that wrote it in his secret retirement, and declared him a fool that published it after his death. Politulus had more manners than to differ from men of such a rank and character, and therefore he sneered at the devout expressions as he heard them read, and made the divine treatise a matter of scorn and ridicule; and yet it was well known, that neither this fine gentleman, nor the courtier, nor the man of wealth, had a grain of devotion in them beyond their horses that waited at the door with their gilded chariots. But this is the way of the world: blind men will talk of the beauty of colours, and of the harmony or disproportion of figures in painting; the deaf will prate of discords in music; and those who have nothing to do with religion, will arraign the best treatise on

divine ſubjects, though they do not underſtand the very language of the ſcripture, nor the common terms or phraſes uſed in Chriſtianity.

VII. I MIGHT here name another ſort of judges, who will ſet themſelves up to decide in favours of an author, or will pronounce him a mere blunderer, according to the company they have kept, and the judgment they have heard paſt upon a book by others of their own ſtamp or ſize, though they have no knowledge or taſte of the ſubject themſelves. Theſe with a fluent and voluble tongue become mere echoes of the praiſes or cenſures of other men. Sonillus happened to be in the room where the three gentlemen juſt mentioned gave out their thoughts ſo freely upon an admirable book of devotion: and two days afterwards he met with ſome friends of his where this book was the ſubject of converſation and praiſe. Sonillus wondered at their dulneſs, and repeated the jeſts which he had heard caſt upon the weakneſs of the author. His knowledge of the book and his deciſion upon it was all from hearſay, for he had never ſeen it: and if he had read it through, he had no manner of right to judge about the things of religion, having no more knowledge, nor taſte of any thing of inward piety, than a hedgehog or a bear has of politeneſs.

When I had written theſe remarks, Probus, who knew all theſe four gentlemen, wiſhed they might have opportunity to read their own character as it is repreſented here. Alas! Probus, I fear it would do them very little good, though it may guard others againſt their folly: for their is never a one of them would find their own name in theſe characters if they read them, though all their acquaintance would acknowledge the features immediately, and ſee the perſons almoſt alive in the picture.

VIII. THERE is yet another miſchievous principle which prevails among ſome perſons in paſſing a judgment on the writings of others, and that is, when from the ſecret ſtimulations of vanity, pride, or envy, they deſpiſe a valuable book, and throw contempt upon it by wholeſale: and if you aſk them the reaſon of their ſevere cenſure, they will tell you perhaps, they have found

found a miſtake, or two in it, or there are a few ſentiments or expreſſions not ſuited to their tooth and humour. Bavius cries down an admirable treatiſe of philoſophy, and ſays there is Atheiſm in it, becauſe there are a few ſentences that ſeem to ſuppoſe brutes to be mere machines. Under the ſame influence, Momus will not allow Paradiſe Loſt to be a good poem, becauſe he had read ſome flat and heavy lines in it, and he thought Milton had too much honour done him. It is a paltry humour that inclines a man to rail at any human performance becauſe it is not abſolutely perfect. Horace would give us a better example.

Sunt delicta quibus nos ignoviſſe velimus,
Nam neque chorda ſonum reddit quam vult manus et mens,
Nec ſemper feriet quodcunque minabitur arcus:
Atque ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura. Hor. de Art. Poet.

Thus Engliſhed.

Be not too rigidly cenſorious:
A ſtring may jar in the beſt maſter's hand,
And the moſt ſkilful archer miſs his aim:
So in a poem elegantly writ
I will not quarrel with a ſmall miſtake,
Such as our nature's frailty may excuſe.
Roſcommon.

This noble tranſlator of Horace, whom I here cite, has a very honourable opinion of Homer in the main, yet he allows him to be juſtly cenſured for ſome groſſer ſpots and blemiſhes in him.

For who without averſion ever look'd
On holy garbage, though by Homer cook'd,
Whoſe railing heroes and whoſe wounded gods
Make ſome ſuſpect he ſnores as well as nods.

Such wiſe and juſt diſtinctions ought to be made when we paſs a judgment on mortal things, but envy

condemns by wholesale. Envy is a curſed plant; ſome fibres of it are rooted almoſt in every man's nature, and it works in a ſly and imperceptible manner, and that even in ſome perſons who in the main are men of wiſdom and piety. They know not how to bear the praiſes that are given to an ingenious author, eſpecially if he be living and of their profeſſion, and therefore they will, if poſſible, find ſome blemiſh in his writings, that they may nibble and bark at it. They will endeavour to diminiſh the honour of the beſt treatiſe that has been written on any ſubject, and to render it uſeleſs by their cenſures, rather than ſuffer their envy to lie aſleep, and the little miſtakes of that author to paſs unexpoſed. Perhaps they will commend the work in general with a pretended air of candour, but paſs ſo many ſly and invidious remarks upon it afterward, as ſhall effectually deſtroy all their cold and formal praiſes *.

XI. When a perſon feels any thing of this invidious humour working in him, he may by the following conſiderations attempt the correction of it. Let him think with himſelf how many are the beauties of ſuch an author whom he cenſures, in compariſon of his blemiſhes, and remember that it is a much more honourable and good-natured thing to find out peculiar beauties than faults: true and undiſguiſed candour is a much more amiable and divine talent than accuſation. Let him reflect again, what an eaſy matter it is to find a miſtake in all human authors, who are neceſſarily fallible and imperfect.

I confeſs where an author ſets up himſelf to ridicule divine writers and things ſacred, and yet aſſumes an air of ſovereignty and dictatorſhip, to exalt and almoſt deify all the Pagan ancients, and caſt his ſcorn upon all the moderns, eſpecially if they do but favour of miracles

* I grant when wiſdom itſelf cenſures a weak and fooliſh performance it will paſs its ſevere ſentence, and yet with an air of candour, if the author has any thing valuable in him: but envy will oftentimes imitate the ſame favourable airs, in order to make its falſe cavils appear more juſt and credible, when it has a mind to ſnarl at ſome of the brighteſt performances of a human writer.

miracles and the goſpel, it is fit the admirers of this author ſhould know that nature and theſe ancients are not the ſame, though ſome writers always unite them. Reaſon and nature never made theſe ancient Heathens their ſtandard, either of art or genius, of writing or heroiſm. Sir Richard Steele, in his little eſſay, called The Chriſtian Hero, has ſhewn our Saviour and St. Paul in a more glorious and tranſcendent light, than a Virgil or a Homer could do for their Achilles, Ulyſſes, or Æneas; and I am perſuaded, if Moſes and David had not been inſpired writers, theſe very men would have ranked them at leaſt with Herodotus and Horace, if not given them the ſuperior place.

But where an author has many beauties conſiſtent with virtue, piety, and truth, let not little critics exalt themſelves, and ſhower down their ill-nature upon him, without bounds or meaſure; but rather ſtretch their own powers of ſoul till they write a treatiſe ſuperior to that which they condemn. This is the nobleſt and ſureſt manner of ſuppreſſing what they cenſure.

A little wit, or a little learning, with a good degree of vanity and ill-nature, will teach a man to pour out whole pages of remark and reproach upon one real or fancied miſtake of a great and good author: and this may be dreſſed up by the ſame talents, and made entertaining enough to the world, who loves reproach and ſcandal: but if the remarker would but once make this attempt, and try to outſhine the author by writing a better book on the ſame ſubject, he would ſoon be convinced of his own inſufficiency, and perhaps might learn to judge more juſtly and favourably of the performance of other men. A cobler or a ſhoemaker may find ſome little fault with the latchet of a ſhoe that an Appelles had painted, and perhaps with juſtice too; when the whole figure and portraiture is ſuch as none but Appelles could paint. Every poor low genius may cavil at what the richeſt and nobleſt hath performed: but it is a ſign of envy and malice, added to the littleneſs and poverty of genius, when ſuch a cavil becomes a ſufficient reaſon to pronounce at once againſt a bright author and a whole valuable treatiſe.

X. ANOTHER, and that a very frequent fault, in paſſing

paſſing a judgment upon books is this, that perſons ſpread the ſame praiſes or the ſame reproaches over a whole treatiſe, and all the chapters in it, which are due only to ſome of them. They judge as it were by wholeſale, without making a due diſtinction between the ſeveral parts or ſections of the performance; and this is ready to lead thoſe who hear them talk into a dangerous miſtake. Florus is a great and juſt admirer of the late archbiſhop of Cambray, and mightily commends every thing he has written, and will allow no blemiſh in him: whereas the writings of that excellent man are not all of a piece, nor are thoſe very books of his, which have a good number of beautiful and valuable ſentiments in them, to be recommended throughout, or all at once without diſtinction. There is his Demonſtration of the exiſtence and attributes of God, which has juſtly gained an univerſal eſteem, for bringing down ſome new and noble thoughts of the wiſdom of the creation to the underſtanding of the unlearned, and they are ſuch as well deſerve the peruſal of the men of ſcience, perhaps as far as the 50th ſection; but there are many of the following ſections which are very weakly written, and ſome of them built upon an enthuſiaſtical and miſtaken ſcheme, a-kin to the peculiar opinions of father Malebranche; ſuch as Sect. 51. 53. That we know the finite only by the ideas of the infinite. Sect. 55. 60. That the ſuperior reaſon in man is God himſelf acting in him. Sect. 61. 62. That the idea of unity cannot be taken from creatures, but from God only; and ſeveral of his Sections, from 65. to 68. upon the doctrine of liberty, ſeem to be inconſiſtent. Again, toward the end of his book, he ſpends more time and pains than are needful in refuting the Epicurean fancy of atoms moving eternally through infinite changes, which might be done effectually in a much ſhorter and better way.

So in his Poſthumous Eſſays, and his Letters, there are many admirable thoughts in practical and experimental religion, and very beautiful and divine ſentiments in devotion; but ſometimes in large paragraphs, or in whole chapters together, you find him in the clouds of myſtic divinity, and he never deſcends within the reach of common ideas or common ſenſe.

But

But remember this alſo, that there are but few ſuch authors as this great man, who talks ſo very weakly ſometimes, and yet in other places is ſo much ſuperior to the greateſt part of writers.

There are other inſtances of this kind where men of good ſenſe in the main ſet up for judges, but they carry too many of their paſſions about them, and then like lovers, they are in rapture at the name of their fair idol; they laviſh out all their incenſe upon that ſhrine, and cannot bear the thought of admitting a blemiſh in them.

You ſhall hear Altiſino not only admire Caſimire of Poland in his lyrics, as the utmoſt purity and perfection of Latin poeſy, but he will allow nothing in him to be extravagant or faulty, and will vindicate every line: nor can I much wonder at it, when I have heard him pronounce Lucan the beſt of the ancient Latins, and idolize his very weakneſſes and miſtakes. I will readily acknowledge the Odes of Caſimire to have more ſpirit and force, more magnificence and fire in them, and in twenty places ariſe to more dignity and beauty than I could ever meet with in any of our modern poets: yet I am afraid to ſay, that *Pala futilis e luce* has dignity enough in it for a robe made for the Almighty, Lib. 4. Od. 7. l. 37. or that the Man of Virtue in Od. 3. l. 44. under the ruins of heaven and earth, will bear up the fragments of the fallen world with a comely wound on his ſhoulders.

——— late ruenti
Sulficiens ſua colla cælo
Mundum decoro vulnere fulciet;
Interque cæli fragmina.

Yet I muſt needs confeſs alſo, that it is hardly poſſible a man ſhould riſe to ſo exalted and ſublime a vein of poeſy as Caſimire, who is not in danger now and then of ſuch extravagancies: but ſtill they ſhould not be admired or defended, if we pretend to paſs a juſt judgment on the writings of the greateſt men.

Milton is a noble genius, and the world agrees to confeſs it; his poem of Paradiſe Loſt is a glorious performance,

formance, and rivals the moſt famous pieces of antiquity; but that reader muſt be deeply prejudiced in favour of the poet, who can imagine him equal to himſelf through all that work. Neither the ſublime ſentiments, nor dignity of numbers, nor force or beauty of expreſſion are equally maintained, even in all thoſe parts which require grandeur or beauty, force or harmony. I cannot but conſent to Mr Dryden's opinion, though I will not uſe his words, that for ſome ſcores of lines together, there is a coldneſs and flatneſs, and almoſt a perfect abſence of that ſpirit of poeſy which breathes, and lives, and flames in other pages.

XI. When you hear any perſon pretending to give his judgment of a book, conſider with yourſelf whether he be a capable judge, or whether he may not lie under ſome unhappy bias or prejudice, for or againſt it, or whether he has made a ſufficient inquiry to form his juſteſt ſentiments upon it.

Though he be a man of good ſenſe, yet he is uncapable of paſſing a true judgment of a particular book, if he be not well acquainted with the ſubject of which it treats, and the manner in which it is written, be it verſe or proſe; or if he hath not had opportunity or leiſure to look ſufficiently into the writing itſelf.

Again, though he be never ſo capable of judging on all other accounts, by the knowledge of the ſubject, and of the book itſelf, yet you are to conſider alſo, whether there be any thing in the author, in his manner, in his language, in his opinions, and his particular party, which may warp the ſentiments of him that judgeth, to think well or ill of the treatiſe, and to paſs too favourable or too ſevere a ſentence concerning it.

If you find that he is either an unfit judge becauſe of his ignorance, or becauſe of his prejudices, his judgment of that book ſhould go for nothing. Philographo is a good divine, an uſeful preacher, and an approved expoſitor of ſcripture, but he never had a taſte for any of the polite learning of the age: he was fond of every thing that appeared in a devout dreſs, but all verſe was alike to him: he told me laſt week there was a very fine book of poems publiſhed on the three Chriſtian graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity; and a moſt elegant piece of

oratory

oratory on the four laſt things, Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. Do you think I ſhall buy either of thoſe books merely on Philographo's recommendation?

CHAP. VI.

Of living Inſtructions and Lectures, of Teachers and Learners.

I.

THERE are few perſons of ſo penetrating a genius, and ſo juſt a judgment, as to be capable of learning the arts and ſciences without the aſſiſtance of teachers. There is ſcarce any ſcience ſo ſafely and ſo ſpeedily learned, even by the nobleſt genius and the beſt books, without a tutor. His aſſiſtance is abſolutely neceſſary for moſt perſons, and it is very uſeful for all beginners. Books are a ſort of dumb teachers, they point out the way to learning; but if we labour under any doubt or miſtake, they cannot anſwer ſudden queſtions, or explain preſent doubts and difficulties: this is properly the work of a living inſtructor.

II. THERE are very few tutors who are ſufficiently furniſhed with ſuch univerſal learning, as to ſuſtain all the parts and provinces of inſtruction. The ſciences are numerous, and many of them lie far wide of each other; and it is beſt to enjoy the inſtruction of two or three tutors at leaſt, in order to run through the whole encyclopedia, or circle of ſciences, where it may be obtained; then we may expect that each will teach the few parts of learning which are committed to his care in greater perfection. But where this advantage cannot be had with convenience, one great man muſt ſupply the place of two or three common inſtructors.

III. IT is not ſufficient that inſtructors be competently ſkilled in thoſe ſciences which they profeſs and teach; but they ſhould have ſkill alſo in the art or method of teaching, and patience in the practice of it.

It is a great unhappineſs indeed, when perſons, by a ſpirit of party, or faction, or intereſt, or by purchaſe, are

are ſet up for tutors, who have neither due knowledge of ſcience, nor ſkill in the way of communication. And alas! there are others, who with all their ignorance and inſufficiency, have ſelf-admiration and effrontery enough to ſet up themſelves: and the poor pupils fare accordingly, and grow lean in their underſtandings.

And let it be obſerved alſo, there are ſome very learned men who know much themſelves, but have not the talent of communicating their own knowledge; or elſe they are lazy, and will take no pains at it. Either they have an obſcure and perplexed way of talking, or they ſhew their learning uſeleſsly, and make a long periphraſis on every word of the book they explain, or they cannot condeſcend to young beginners, or they run preſently into the elevated parts of the ſcience, becauſe it gives themſelves greater pleaſure, or they are ſoon angry and impatient, and cannot bear with a few impertinent queſtions of a young, inquiſitive, and ſprightly genius; or elſe they ſkim over a ſcience in a very ſlight and ſuperficial ſurvey, and never lead their diſciples into the depths of it.

IV. A GOOD tutor ſhould have characters and qualifications very different from all theſe. He is ſuch a one as both can and will apply himſelf with diligence and concern, and indefatigable patience to effect what he undertakes; to teach his diſciples, and ſee that they learn; to adapt his way and method as near as may be to the various diſpoſitions, as well as to the capacities of thoſe whom he inſtructs, and to inquire often into their progreſs and improvement.

And he ſhould take particular care of his own temper and conduct, that there be nothing in him or about him which may be of ill example; nothing that may ſavour of a haughty temper, a mean and ſordid ſpirit; nothing that may expoſe him to the averſion or to the contempt of his ſcholars, or create a prejudice in their minds againſt him and his inſtructions: but, if poſſible, he ſhould have ſo much of a natural candour and ſweetneſs mixt with all the improvements of learning, as might convey knowledge into the minds of his diſciples with a ſort of genteel inſinuation and ſovereign delight,

and may tempt them into the higheſt improvements of their reaſon by a reſiſtleſs and inſenſible force. But I ſhall have occaſion to ſay more on this ſubject, when I come to ſpeak more directly of the methods of the communication of knowledge.

V. The learner ſhould attend with conſtancy and care on all the inſtructions of his tutor; and if he happens to be at any time unavoidably hindered, he muſt endeavour to retrieve the loſs by double induſtry for time to come. He ſhould always recollect and review his lectures, read over ſome other author or authors upon the ſame ſubject, confer upon it with his inſtructor or with his aſſociates, and write down the cleareſt reſult of his preſent thoughts, reaſonings, and inquiries, which he may have recourſe to hereafter, either to re-examine them and to apply them to proper uſe, or to improve them further to his own advantage.

VI. A Student ſhould never ſatisfy himſelf with bare attendance on the lectures of his tutor, unleſs he clearly takes up his ſenſe and meaning, and underſtands the things which he teaches. A young diſciple ſhould behave himſelf ſo well as to gain the affection and the ear of his inſtructor, that upon every occaſion he may with the utmoſt freedom aſk queſtions, and talk over his own ſentiments, his doubts and difficulties with him, and in a humble and modeſt manner deſire the ſolution of them.

VII. Let the learner endeavour to maintain an honourable opinion of his inſtructor, and heedfully liſten to his inſtructions, as one willing to be led by a more experienced guide: and though he is not bound to fall in with every ſentiment of his tutor, yet he ſhould ſo far comply with him, as to reſolve upon a juſt conſideration of the matter, and try and examine it thoroughly with an honeſt heart, before he preſume to determine againſt him. And then it ſhould be done with great modeſty, with a humble jealouſy of himſelf, and apparent unwillingneſs to differ from his tutor, if the force of argument and truth did not conſtrain him.

VIII. It is a frequent and growing folly in our age, that pert young diſciples ſoon fancy themſelves

wiſer than thoſe who teach them; at the firſt view, or upon a very little thought, they can diſcern the inſignificancy, weakneſs, and miſtake of what their teacher aſſerts. The youth of our day, by an early petulancy, and pretended liberty of thinking for themſelves, dare reject at once, and that with a ſort of ſcorn, all thoſe ſentiments and doctrines which their teachers have determined, perhaps after long and repeated conſideration, after years of mature ſtudy, careful obſervation, and much prudent experience.

IX. It is true, teachers and maſters are not infallible, nor are they always in the right; and it muſt be acknowledged, it is a matter of ſome difficulty for younger minds to maintain a juſt and ſolemn veneration for the authority and advice of their parents, and the inſtructions of their tutors, and yet at the ſame time to ſecure to themſelves a juſt freedom in their own thoughts. We are ſometimes too ready to imbibe all their ſentiments without examination, if we reverence and love them; or, on the other hand, if we take all freedom to conteſt their opinions, we are ſometimes tempted to caſt off that love and reverence to their perſons which God and nature dictate. Youth is ever in danger of theſe two extremes.

X. But I think I may ſafely conclude thus: though the authority of a teacher muſt not abſolutely determine the judgment of his pupil, yet young and raw and unexperienced learners ſhould pay all proper deference that can be to the inſtructions of their parents and teachers, ſhort of abſolute ſubmiſſion to their dictates. Yet ſtill we muſt maintain this, that they ſhould never receive any opinion into their aſſent, whether it be conformable or contrary to the tutor's mind, without ſufficient evidence of it firſt given to their own reaſoning powers.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of learning a Language.

THE firſt thing required in reading an author, or in hearing lectures of a tutor, is, that you well underſtand the language in which they write or ſpeak. Living languages, or ſuch as are the native tongue of any nation in the preſent age, are more eaſily learnt and taught by a few rules, and much familiar converſe, joined to the reading ſome proper authors. The dead languages are ſuch as ceaſe to be ſpoken in any nation; and even theſe are more eaſy to be taught (as far as may be) in that method wherein living languages are beſt learnt, i. e. partly by rule, and partly by rote or cuſtom. And it may not be improper in this place to mention a very few directions for that purpoſe.

I. BEGIN with the moſt neceſſary and moſt general obſervations and rules which belong to that language, compiled in the form of a grammar; and theſe are but few in moſt languages. The regular declenſions and variation of nouns and verbs ſhould be early and thoroughly learnt by heart, together with twenty or thirty of the plaineſt and moſt neceſſary rules of ſyntax.

But let it be obſerved, that in almoſt all languages ſome of the very commoneſt nouns and verbs have many irregularities in them: ſuch are the common auxiliary verbs, *to be* and *to have*, *to do* and *to be done*, &c. The comparatives and ſuperlatives of the words good, bad, great, much, ſmall, little, &c. and theſe ſhould be learnt among the firſt rules and variations, becauſe they continually occur.

But as to other words which are leſs frequent, let but few of the anomalies or irregularities of the tongue be taught among the general rules to young beginners. Theſe will better come in afterwards to be learnt by advanced ſcholars, in a way of notes on the rules, as in the Latin grammar called the Oxford grammar, or in Ruddiman's notes on his Rudiments, &c. Or they may be learnt by examples alone, when they do occur; or

or by a larger and more complete ſyſtem of grammar, which deſcends to the more particular forms of ſpeech: ſo the heteroclite nouns of the Latin tongue, which are taught in the ſchool-book called *Quæ Genus*, ſhould not be touched in the firſt learning of the rudiments of that tongue.

II. As the grammar by which you learn any tongue ſhould be very ſhort at firſt, ſo it muſt be written in a tongue with which you are well acquainted, and which is very familiar to you. Therefore I much prefer even the common Engliſh Accidence (as it is called) to any grammar whatſoever written in Latin for this end. The Engliſh Accidence has doubtleſs many faults: but thoſe editions of it which were printed ſince the year 1728, under the correction of a learned profeſſor, are the beſt; or the Engliſh rudiments of the Latin tongue, by that learned North Briton Mr. Ruddiman, which are perhaps the moſt uſeful books of this kind which I am acquainted with; eſpecially becauſe I would not depart too far from the ancient and common forms of teaching, which ſeveral good grammarians have done, to the great detriment of ſuch lads as have been removed to other ſchools.

The tireſome and unreaſonable method of learning the Latin tongue by a grammar with Latin rules, would appear even to thoſe maſters who teach it ſo, in its proper colours of abſurdity and ridicule, if thoſe very maſters would attempt to learn the Chineſe or Arabic tongue, by a grammar written in the Arabic or the Chineſe language. Mr. Clark, of Hull, has ſaid enough in a few pages of the preface to his new grammar 1723, to make that practice appear very irrational and improper; though he has ſaid it in ſo warm and angry a manner that it has kindled Mr. Ruddiman to write againſt him, and to ſay what can be ſaid to vindicate a practice, which, I think, is utterly indefenſible.

III. At the ſame time when you begin the rules begin alſo the practice. As for inſtance, when you decline *muſa*, *muſæ*, read and conſtrue the ſame day ſome eaſy Latin author by the help of a tutor, or with ſome Engliſh tranſlation: chooſe ſuch a book whoſe ſtyle is ſimple,

ſimple, and the ſubject of diſcourſe is very plain, obvious, and not hard to be underſtood; many little books have been compoſed with this view, as Corderius's Colloquies, ſome of Eraſmus's little writings, the ſayings of the wiſe men of Greece, Cato's moral diſtichs, and the reſt which are collected at the end of Mr. Ruddiman's Engliſh grammar, or the Latin Teſtament of Caſtellio's tranſlation, which is accounted the pureſt Latin, &c. Theſe are very proper upon this occaſion, together with Æſop's and Phædrus's Fables, and little ſtories, and the common and daily affairs of domeſtic life, written in the Latin tongue. But let the higher poets, and orators, and hiſtorians, and other writers whoſe language is more laboured, and whoſe ſenſe is more remote from common life, be rather kept out of ſight, till there be ſome proficiency made in the language.

It is ſtrange that maſters ſhould teach children ſo early Tully's Epiſtles, or Orations, or the poems of Ovid or Virgil, whoſe ſenſe is ſometimes difficult to find, becauſe of the great tranſpoſition of the words; and when they have found the grammatical ſenſe, they have very little uſe of it, becauſe they have ſcarce any notion of the ideas and deſign of the writer, it being ſo remote from the knowledge of a child; whereas little common ſtories and colloquies, and the rules of a child's behaviour, and ſuch obvious ſubjects, will much better aſſiſt the memory of the words by their acquaintance with the things.

IV. HERE it may be uſeful alſo to appoint the learner to get by heart the more common and uſeful words, both nouns and adjectives, pronouns and verbs, out of ſome well-formed and judicious vocabulary. This will furniſh him with names for the moſt familiar ideas.

V. As ſoon as ever the learner is capable, let the tutor converſe with him in the tongue which is to be learned, if it be a living language, or if it be Latin, which is the living language of the learned world: thus he will acquaint himſelf a little with it by rote as well as by rule, and by living practice as well as by reading the writings of the dead. For if a child of two years old by this method learns to ſpeak his mother-tongue,

I am ſure the ſame method will greatly aſſiſt and facilitate the learning of any other language to thoſe who are older.

VI. Let the chief leſſons and the chief exerciſes of ſchools, v. c. where the Latin is learnt (at leaſt for the firſt year or more), be the nouns, verbs, and general rules of ſyntax, together with a mere tranſlation out of ſome Latin author into Engliſh; and let ſcholars be employed and examined by their teacher daily, in reducing the words to their original or theme, to the firſt caſe of nouns or firſt tenſe of verbs, and giving an account of their formations and changes, their ſyntax and dependencies, which is called parſing. This is a moſt uſeful exerciſe to lead boys into a complete and thorough knowledge of what they are doing.

The Engliſh tranſlations, which the learner has made, ſhould be well corrected by the maſter, and then they ſhould be tranſlated back again for the next day's exerciſe by the child into Latin, while the Latin author is with-held from him: but he ſhould have the Latin words given him in their firſt caſe and tenſe; and ſhould never be left to ſeek them himſelf from a dictionary: and the nearer he tranſlates it to the words of the author whence he derives his Engliſh, the more ſhould the child be commended. Thus will he gain ſkill in two languages at once. I think Mr Clark has done good ſervice to the public by his tranſlations of Latin books for this end.

But let the fooliſh cuſtom of employing every ſilly boy to make themes or declamations and verſes upon moral ſubjects in a ſtrange tongue, before he underſtands common ſenſe even in his own language, be abandoned and caſhiered for ever.

VII. As the learner improves, let him acquaint himſelf with the anomalous words, the irregular declenſion of nouns and verbs, the more uncommon connections of words in ſyntax, and the exceptions to the general rules of grammar; but let them all be reduced, as far as poſſible, to thoſe ſeveral original and general rules which he has learned, as the proper rank and place to which they belong.

VIII.

VIII. While he is doing this, it may be proper for him to converſe with authors which are a little more difficult, with hiſtorians, orators, and poets, &c. but let his tutor inform him of the Roman or Greek cuſtoms which occur therein. Let the lad then tranſlate ſome parts of them into his mother tongue, or into ſome other well-known language, and thence back again into the original language of the author. But let the verſe be tranſlated into proſe, for poeſy does not belong to grammar.

IX. By this time he will be able to acquaint himſelf with ſome of the ſpecial emphaſis of ſpeech, and the peculiar idioms of the tongue. He ſhould be taught alſo the ſpecial beauties and ornaments of the language: and this may be done partly by the help of authors who have collected ſuch idioms, and cait them into an eaſy method, and partly by the judicious remarks which his inſtructor may make upon the authors which he reads, wherefoever ſuch peculiarities of ſpeech or ſpecial elegancies occur.

X. Though the labour of learning all the leſſons by heart, that are borrowed from poetical authors, which they conſtrue, is an unjuſt and unneceſſary impoſition upon the learner, yet he muſt take the pains to commit to memory the moſt neceſſary, if not all the common rules of grammar, with an example or two under each of them: and ſome of the ſelect and moſt uſeful periods or ſentences in the Latin or Greek author which he reads, may be learnt by heart, together with ſome of the choicer leſſons out of their poets; and ſometimes whole epiſodes out of heroic poems, &c. as well as whole odes among the lyrics may deſerve this honour.

XI. Let this be always carefully obſerved, that the learners perfectly underſtand the ſenſe as well as the language of all thoſe rules, leſſons, or paragraphs which they attempt to commit to memory. Let the teacher poſſeſs them of their true meaning, and then the labour will become eaſy and pleaſant: whereas to impoſe on a child to get by heart a long ſcroll of unknown phraſes or words, without any ideas under them, is a piece of uſeleſs tyranny, a cruel impoſition, and a practice fitter for

for a jack-daw or a parrot, than for any thing that wears the ſhape of a man.

XII. And here, I think, I have a fair occaſion given me to conſider that queſtion which has been often debated in converſation, viz. Whether the teaching of a ſchool full of boys to learn Latin by the Heathen poets, as Ovid in his Epiſtles, and the filly fables of his Metamorphoſes, Horace, Juvenal, and Martial, in their impure odes, ſatires, and epigrams, &c. is ſo proper and agreeable a practice in a Chriſtian country?

XIII. (1.) I Grant the language and ſtyle of thoſe men who wrote in their own native tongue, muſt be more pure and perfect in ſome nice elegancies and peculiarities, than modern writers of other nations who have imitated them; and it is owned alſo, that the beauties of their poeſy may much excel: but in either of theſe things, boys cannot be ſuppoſed to be much improved or injured by one or the other.

XIV. (2.) It ſhall be confeſt too, that modern poets, in every living language, have brought into their works ſo many words, epithets, phraſes, and metaphors, from the Heathen fables and ſtories of their gods and heroes, that in order to underſtand theſe modern writers, it is neceſſary to know a little of thoſe ancient follies: but it may be anſwered, that a good dictionary, or ſuch a book as the Pantheon, or hiſtory of thoſe Gentile deities, &c. may give ſufficient information of thoſe ſtories, ſo far as they are neceſſary and uſeful to ſchool-boys.

XV. (3.) I will grant yet further, that lads who are deſigned to make great ſcholars or divines, may, by reading theſe Heathen poets, be taught better to underſtand the writings of the ancient fathers againſt the Heathen religion; and they learn here what ridiculous fooleries the Gentile nations believed as the articles of their faith, what wretched and foul idolatries they indulged and practiſed as duties of religion, for want of the light of divine revelation. But this perhaps may be learnt as well either by the Pantheon, or ſome other collection, at ſchool; or after they have left the ſchool, they may read what their own inclinations lead them to, and whatſoever of this kind may be really uſeful for them.

XVI.

XVI. But the great queſtion is, Whether all theſe advantages which have been mentioned will compenſate for the long months and years that are waſted among their incredible and trifling romances, their falſe and ſhameful ſtories of the gods and goddeſſes and their amours, and the lewd heroes and vicious poets of the Heathen world? Can theſe idle and ridiculous tales be of any real and ſolid advantage in human life? Do they not too often defile the mind with vain, miſchievous, and impure ideas? Do they not ſtick long upon the fancy, and leave an unhappy influence upon youth? Do they not tincture the imagination with folly and vice very early, and pervert it from all that is good and holy?

XVII. Upon the whole ſurvey of things, it is my opinion, that for almoſt all boys who learn this tongue, it would be much ſafer to be taught Latin poeſy (as ſoon and as far as they can need it) from thoſe excellent tranſlations of David's Pſalms, which are given us by Buchanan in the various meaſures of Horace; and the lower claſſes had better read Dr Johnſton's tranſlation of theſe pſalms, another elegant writer of the Scots nation, inſtead of Ovid's Epiſtles; for he has turned the ſame pſalms, perhaps with greater elegancy, into elegiac verſe, whereof the learned W. Benſon, Eſq. has lately publiſhed a noble edition, and I hear that theſe pſalms are honoured with an increaſing uſe in the ſchools of Holland and Scotland. A ſtanza, or a couplet of theſe writers would now and then ſtick upon the minds of youth, and would furniſh them infinitely better with pious and moral thoughts, and do ſomething towards making them good men and Chriſtians.

XVIII. A little book collected from the Pſalms of both theſe tranſlators, Buchanan and Johnſton, and a few other Chriſtian poets, would be of excellent uſe for ſchools to begin their inſtructions in Latin poeſy; and I am well aſſured this would be richly ſufficient for all thoſe in lower rank, who never deſign a learned profeſſion, and yet cuſtom has foolishly bound them to learn that language.

But

But leſt it ſhould be thought hard to caſt Horace and Virgil, Ovid and Juvenal, entirely out of the ſchools, I add, if here and there a few lyric odes, or pieces of ſatires or ſome epiſodes of heroic verſe, with here and there an epigram of Martial, all which ſhall be clear and pure from the ſtains of vice and impiety, and which may inſpire the mind with noble ſentiments, fire the fancy with bright and warm ideas, or teach leſſons of morality and prudence, were choſen out of thoſe ancient Roman writers for the uſe of the ſchools, and were collected and printed in one moderate volume, or two at the moſt, it would be abundantly ſufficient proviſion out of the Roman poets for the inſtruction of boys in all that is neceſſary in that age of life.

Surely Juvenal himſelf would not have the face to vindicate the maſters who teach boys his 6th ſatire, and many paragraphs of ſeveral others, when he himſelf has charged us,

Nil dictu fœdum, viſuque hæc limina tangat
Intra quæ puer eſt. Sat. 14.

Suffer no lewdneſs, nor indecent ſpeech,
Th' apartment of the tender youth to reach.
Dryden.

Thus far in anſwer to the foregoing queſtion.

But I retire; for Mr Clark, of Hull, in his treatiſe of Education, and Mr Philips, preceptor to the duke of Cumberland, has given more excellent directions for learning Latin.

XIX. When a language is learnt, if it be of any uſe at all, it is pity it ſhould be forgotten again. It is proper, therefore, to take all juſt opportunities to read ſomething frequently in that language, when other neceſſary and important ſtudies will give you leave. As in learning any tongue, dictionaries which contain words and phraſes ſhould be always at hand, ſo they ſhould be ever kept within reach by perſons who would remember a tongue which they have learnt. Nor ſhould we at any time content ourſelves with a doubtful gueſs at the ſenſe or meaning of any words which occur,

but

but conſult the dictionary, which may give us certain information, and thus ſecure us from miſtake. It is mere ſloth which makes us content ourſelves with uncertain gueſſes; and indeed this is neither ſafe nor uſeful for perſons who would learn any language or ſcience, or have a deſire to retain what they have acquired.

XX. When you have learnt one or many languages ever ſo perfectly, take heed of priding yourſelf in theſe acquiſitions: they are but mere treaſures of words, or inſtruments of true and ſolid knowledge, and whoſe chief deſign is to lead us into an acquaintance with things, or to enable us the more eaſily to convey thoſe ideas or that knowledge to others. An acquaintance with the various tongues is nothing elſe but a relief againſt the miſchief which the building of Babel introduced: and were I maſter of as many languages as were ſpoken at Babel, I ſhould make but a poor pretence to true learning or knowledge, if I had not clear and diſtinct ideas, and uſeful notions in my head under the words which my tongue could pronounce. Yet ſo unhappy a thing is human nature, that this ſort of knowledge of ſounds and ſyllables is ready to puff up the mind with vanity, more than the moſt valuable and ſolid improvements of it. The pride of a grammarian, or a critic, generally exceeds that of a philoſopher.

CHAP. VIII.

Of inquiring into the Senſe and Meaning of any Writer or Speaker, and eſpecially the Senſe of the Sacred Writings.

IT is a great unhappineſs that there is ſuch an ambiguity in words and forms of ſpeech, that the ſame ſentence may be drawn into different ſignifications; whereby it comes to paſs, that it is difficult ſometimes for the reader exactly to hit upon the ideas which the writer or ſpeaker had in his mind. Some of the beſt rules to direct us herein are ſuch as theſe.

I. Be well acquainted with the tongue itſelf, or language wherein the author's mind is expreſt. Learn not only the true meaning of each word, but the ſenſe which

which thoſe words obtain when placed in ſuch a particular ſituation and order. Acquaint yourſelf with the peculiar power and emphaſis of the ſeveral modes of ſpeech, and the various idioms of the tongue. The ſecondary ideas which cuſtom has ſuperadded to many words ſhould alſo be known, as well as the particular and primary meaning of them, if we would underſtand any writer. See Logic, Part I. Chap. 4. §. 3.

II. Consider the ſignification of thoſe words and phraſes, more eſpecially in the ſame nation, or near the ſame age in which that writer lived, and in what ſenſe they are uſed by authors of the ſame nation, opinion, ſect, party, &c.

Upon this account, we may learn to interpret ſeveral phraſes of the New Teſtament out of that verſion of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, which is called the Septuagint; for though that verſion be very imperfect and defective in many things, yet it ſeems to me evident, that the holy writers of the New Teſtament made uſe of that verſion many times in their citation of texts out of the Bible.

III. Compare the words and phraſes in one place of an author, with the ſame or kindred words and phraſes uſed in other places of the ſame author, which are generally called parallel places; and as one expreſſion explains another which is like it, ſo ſometimes a contrary expreſſion will explain its contrary. Remember always, that a writer beſt interprets himſelf; and as we believe the Holy Spirit to be the ſupreme agent in the writings of the Old Teſtament and the New, he can beſt explain himſelf. Hence that theological rule ariſes, that ſcripture is the beſt interpreter of ſcripture; and therefore concordances, which ſhew us parallel places, are of excellent uſe for interpretation.

IV. Consider the ſubject of which the author is treating, and by comparing other places where he treats of the ſame ſubject, you may learn his ſenſe in the place which you are reading, though ſome of the terms which he uſes in thoſe two places may be very different.

And on the other hand, if the author uſes the ſame words where the ſubject of which he treats is not juſt the

the ſame, you cannot learn his ſenſe by comparing thoſe two places, though the mere words may ſeem to agree: for ſome authors, when they are treating of a quite different ſubject, may uſe perhaps the ſame words in a very different ſenſe, as St Paul does the words, faith, and law, and righteouſneſs.

V. OBSERVE the ſcope and deſign of the writer: inquire into his aim and end in that book, or ſection, or paragraph, which will help to explain particular ſentences: for we ſuppoſe a wiſe and judicious writer directs his expreſſions generally toward his deſigned end.

VI. WHEN an author ſpeaks of any ſubject occaſionally, let his ſenſe be explained by thoſe places where he treats of it diſtinctly and profeſſedly: where he treats of any ſubject in myſtical or metaphorical terms, explain them by other places where he treats of the ſame ſubject in terms that are plain and literal: where he ſpeaks in an oratorical, affecting, or perſuaſive way, let this be explained by other places where he treats of the ſame theme in a doctrinal or inſtructive way: where the author ſpeaks more ſtrictly, and particularly on any theme, it will explain the more looſe and general expreſſions: where he treats more largely, it will explain the ſhorter hints and brief intimations: and wherefoever he writes more obſcurely, ſearch out ſome more perſpicuous paſſages in the ſame writer, by which to determine the ſenſe of that obſcurer language.

VII. CONSIDER not only the perſon who is introduced ſpeaking, but the perſons to whom the ſpeech is directed, the circumſtances of time and place, the temper and ſpirit of the ſpeaker, as well as the temper and ſpirit of the hearers: in order to interpret ſcripture well, there needs a good acquaintance with the Jewiſh cuſtoms, ſome knowledge of the ancient Roman and Greek times and manners, which ſometimes ſtrike a ſtrange and ſurpriſing light upon paſſages which before were very obſcure.

VIII. IN particular propoſitions, the ſenſe of an author may be ſometimes known by the inferences which he draws from them; and all thoſe ſenſes may be excluded which will not allow of that inference.

NOTE, This rule indeed is not always certain in reading and interpreting human authors, because they may miſtake in drawing their inferences; but in explaining ſcripture it is a ſure rule; for the ſacred and inſpired writers always make juſt inferences from their own propoſitions. Yet even in them we muſt take heed we do not miſtake an illuſion for an inference, which is many times introduced almoſt in the ſame manner.

IX. IF it be a matter of controverſy, the true ſenſe of the author is ſometimes known by the objections that are brought againſt it. So we may be well aſſured, the Apoſtle ſpeaks againſt our juſtification in the ſight of God by our own works of holineſs, in the 3d, 4th, and 5th chapters of the Epiſtle to the Romans, becauſe of the objection brought againſt him in the beginning of the 6th chapter, viz. 'What ſhall we ſay then? ſhall we continue in ſin that grace may abound?' Which objection could never have been raiſed, if he had been proving our juſtification by our own works of righteouſneſs.

X. IN matters of diſpute, take heed of warping the ſenſe of the writer to your own opinion, by any latent prejudices of ſelf-love and a party-ſpirit. It is this reigning principle of prejudice and party that has given ſuch a variety of ſenſes, both to the ſacred writers and others, which would never have come into the mind of the reader, if he had not laboured under ſome ſuch prepoſſeſſions.

XI. FOR the ſame reaſon, take heed of the prejudices of paſſion, malice, envy, pride, or oppoſition to an author, whereby you may be eaſily tempted to put a falſe and invidious ſenſe upon his words. Lay aſide therefore a carping ſpirit, and read even an adverſary with attention and diligence, with an honeſt deſign to find out his true meaning; do not ſnatch at little lapſes and appearances of miſtake, in oppoſition to his declared and avowed meaning; nor impute any ſenſe or opinion to him which he denies to be his opinion, unleſs it be proved by the moſt plain and expreſs language.

LASTLY,

LASTLY, Remember that you treat every author, writer, or ſpeaker, juſt as you yourſelves would be willing to be treated by others, who are ſearching out the meaning of what you write or ſpeak: and maintain upon your ſpirit an awful ſenſe of the preſence of God, who is the judge of hearts, and will puniſh thoſe who by a baſe and diſhoneſt turn of mind wilfully pervert the meaning of the ſacred writers, or even of common authors, under the influence of culpable prejudices. See more, Logic, Part I. Chap. 6. §. 3. Directions concerning the Definition of Names.

CHAP. IX.

Rules of improvement by converſation.

I.

IF we would improve our minds by converſation, it is a great happineſs to be acquainted with perſons wiſer than ourſelves. It is a piece of uſeful advice therefore, to get the favour of their converſation frequently, as far as circumſtances will allow: and if they happen to be a little reſerved, uſe all obliging methods to draw out of them what may increaſe your own knowledge.

II. WHATSOEVER company you are in, waſte not the time in trifle and impertinence. If you ſpend ſome hours amongſt children, talk with them according to their capacity; mark the young buddings of infant reaſon; obſerve the different motions and diſtinct workings of the animal and the mind, as far as you can diſcern them; take notice by what degrees the little creature grows up to the uſe of his reaſoning powers, and what early prejudices beſet and endanger his underſtanding. By this means you will learn how to addreſs yourſelf to children for their benefit, and perhaps you may derive ſome uſeful philoſophemes or theorems for your own entertainment.

III. IF you happen to be in company with a merchant or a ſailor, a farmer or a mechanic, a milk-maid or a ſpinſter, lead them into a diſcourſe of the matters of their own peculiar province or profeſſion; for every

one knows, or ſhould know, his own buſineſs beſt. In this ſenſe a common mechanic is wiſer than a philoſopher. By this means you may gain ſome improvement in knowledge from every one you meet.

IV. Confine not yourſelf always to one ſort of company, or to perſons of the ſame party or opinion, either in matters of learning, religion, or the civil life, leſt if you ſhould happen to be nurſed up or educated in early miſtake, you ſhould be confirmed and eſtabliſhed in the ſame miſtake, by converſing only with perſons of the ſame ſentiments. A free and general converſation with men of very various countries, and of different parties, opinions, and practices, (ſo far as it may be done ſafely), is of excellent uſe to undeceive us in many wrong judgments which we may have framed, and to lead us into juſter thoughts. It is ſaid, when the King of Siam, near China, firſt converſed with ſome European merchants, who ſought the favour of trading on his coaſt, he inquired of them ſome of the common appearances of ſummer and winter in their country; and when they told him of water growing ſo hard in their rivers, that men, and horſes and laden carriages paſſed over it, and that rain ſometimes fell down almoſt as white and light as feathers, and ſometimes almoſt as hard as ſtones, he would not believe a ſyllable they ſaid; for ice, ſnow, and hail, were names and things utterly unknown to him and to his ſubjects in that hot climate; he renounced all traffic with ſuch ſhameful liars, and would not ſuffer them to trade with his people. See here the natural effects of groſs ignorance.

Converſation with foreigners on various occaſions has a happy influence to enlarge our minds, and to ſet them free from many errors and groſs prejudices we are ready to imbibe concerning them. Domicillus has never travelled five miles from his mother's chimney, and he imagines all outlandiſh men are Papiſts, and worſhip nothing but a croſs. Tytirus, the ſhepherd, was bred up all his life in the country, and never ſaw Rome; he fancied it to be only a huge village, and was therefore infinitely ſurpriſed to find ſuch palaces, ſuch ſtreets, ſuch glittering treaſures and gay magni-

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ficence, as his firſt journey to the city ſhewed him, and with wonder he confeſſes his folly and miſtake.

So Virgil introduces a poor ſhepherd,

Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Melibœe, putavi
Stultus ego huic noſtræ ſimilem, quo ſæpe ſolemus
Paſtores ovium teneros depellere fœtus, &c.

Thus Engliſhed:

Fool that I was, I thought imperial Rome
Like market-towns, where once a-week we come,
And thither drive our tender lambs from home.

Converſation would have given Tityrus a better notion of Rome, though he had never happened to travel thither.

V. In mixed company, among acquaintance and ſtrangers, endeavour to learn ſomething from all. Be ſwift to hear, but be cautious of your tongue, leſt you betray your ignorance, and perhaps offend ſome of thoſe who are preſent too. The ſcripture ſeverely cenſures thoſe who ſpeak evil of the things they know not. Acquaint yourſelf therefore ſometimes with perſons and parties which are far diſtant from your common life and cuſtoms: this is a way whereby you may form a wiſer opinion of men and things. 'Prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good,' is a divine rule, and it comes from the Father of light and truth. But young perſons ſhould practiſe it indeed with due limitation, and under the eye of their elders.

VI. Be not frightened nor provoked at opinions different from your own. Some perſons are ſo confident they are in the right, that they will not come within the hearing of any notions but their own: they canton out to themſelves a little province in the intellectual world, where they fancy the light ſhines, and all the reſt is darkneſs. They never venture into the ocean of knowledge, nor ſurvey the riches of other minds, which are as ſolid and as uſeful, and perhaps are finer gold than what they ever poſſeſſed. Let not men

imagine there is no certain truth but in the ſciences which they ſtudy, and amongſt that party in which they were born and educated.

VII. Believe that it is poſſible to learn ſomething from perſons much below yourſelf. We are all ſhort-ſighted creatures; our views are alſo narrow and limitted; we often ſee but one ſide of a matter, and do not extend our ſight far and wide enough to reach every thing that has a connexion with the thing we talk of: we ſee but in part, and know but in part, therefore it is no wonder we form not right concluſions, becauſe we do not ſurvey the whole of any ſubject or argument. Even the proudeſt admirer of his own parts might find it uſeful to conſult with others, though of inferior capacity and penetration. We have a different proſpect of the ſame thing (if I may ſo ſpeak) according to the different poſition of our underſtandings toward it; a weaker man may ſometimes light on notions which have eſcaped a wiſer, and which the wiſer man might make a happy uſe of, if he would condeſcend to take notice of them.

VIII. It is of conſiderable advantage, when we are purſuing any difficult point of knowledge, to have a ſociety of ingenious correſpondents at hand, to whom we may propoſe it: for every man has ſomething of a different genius and a various turn of mind, whereby the ſubject propoſed will be ſhown in all its lights, it will be repreſented in all its forms, and every ſide of it be turned to view, that a juſter judgment may be framed.

IX. To make converſation more valuable and uſeful, whether it be in a deſigned or accidental viſit, among perſons of the ſame or of different ſexes, after the neceſſary ſalutations are finiſhed, and the ſtream of common talk begins to heſitate, or runs flat and low, let ſome one perſon take a book which may be agreeable to the whole company, and by common content let him read in it ten lines, or a paragraph or two, or a few pages, till ſome word or ſentence gives an occaſion for any of the company to offer a thought or two relating to that ſubject. Interruption of the reader ſhould be no blame, for converſation is the buſineſs; whether

whether it be to confirm what the author ſays, or to improve it, to enlarge upon or to correct it, to object againſt it, or to aſk any queſtion that is a-kin to it; and let every one that pleaſe add their opinion, and promote the converſation. When the diſcourſe ſinks again or diverts to trifles, let him that reads purſue the page, and read on further paragraphs or pages, till ſome occaſion is given by a word or ſentence for a new diſcourſe to be ſtarted, and that with the utmoſt eaſe and freedom. Such a method as this would prevent the hours of a viſit from running all to waſte; and by this means, even among ſcholars, they will ſeldom find occaſion for that too juſt and bitter reflection, 'I have loſt my time in the company of the learned.'

By ſuch practice as this, young ladies may very honourably and agreeably improve their hours; while one applies herſelf to reading, the others employ their attention, even among the various artifices of the needle: but let all of them make their occaſional remarks or inquiries. This will guard a great deal of that precious time from modiſh trifling, impertinence or ſcandal, which might otherways afford matter for painful repentance.

Obſerve this rule in general, whenſoever it lies in your power to lead the converſation, let it be directed to ſome profitable point of knowledge or practice, ſo far as may be done with decency; and let not the diſcourſe and the hours be ſuffered to run looſe without aim or deſign: and when a ſubject is ſtarted, paſs not haſtily to another, before you have brought the preſent theme of diſcourſe to ſome tolerable iſſue, or a joint conſent to drop it.

X. ATTEND with ſincere diligence while any one of the company is declaring his ſenſe of the queſtion propoſed; hear the argument with patience, though it differ ever ſo much from your ſentiments, for you yourſelf are very deſirous to be heard with patience by others who differ from you. Let not your thoughts be active and buſy all the while to find out ſomething to contradict, and by what means to oppoſe the ſpeaker, eſpecially in matters which are not brought to an iſſue. This is a frequent and unhappy temper and practice. You ſhould rather

rather be intent and ſolicitous to take up the mind and meaning of the ſpeaker, zealous to ſeize and approve all that is true in his diſcourſe; nor yet ſhould you want courage to oppoſe where it is neceſſary but let your modeſty and patience, and a friendly temper be as conſpicuous as your zeal.

XI. When a man ſpeaks with much freedom and eaſe, and gives his opinion in the plaineſt language of common ſenſe, do not preſently imagine you ſhall gain nothing by his company. Sometimes you will find a perſon who in his converſation or his writings delivers his thoughts in ſo plain, ſo eaſy, ſo familiar and perſpicuous a manner, that you both underſtand and aſſent to every thing he ſaith, as faſt as you read or hear it: hereupon ſome hearers have been ready to conclude in haſte, 'Surely this man ſays none but common things, I knew as much before, or I could have ſaid all this myſelf.' This is a frequent miſtake. Pellucido was a very great genius; when he ſpoke in the ſenate he was wont to convey his ideas in ſo ſimple and happy a manner, as to inſtruct and convince every hearer, and to inforce the conviction through the whole illuſtrious aſſembly; and that with ſo much evidence, that you would have been ready to wonder, that every one who ſpoke had not ſaid the ſame things: but Pellucido was the only man that could do it, the only ſpeaker who had attained this art and honour. Such is the writer of whom Horace would ſay,

——— *Ut ſibi quivis,*
Speret idem, ſudet multum, fruſtraque laboret
Auſus idem. De Art. Poet.

Smooth be your ſtyle, and plain and natural,
To ſtrike the ſons of Wapping or Whitehall.
While others think this eaſy to attain,
Let them but try, and with their utmoſt pain,
They'll ſweat and ſtrive to imitate in vain.

XII. If any thing ſeem dark in the diſcourſe of your companion, ſo that you have not a clear idea of what

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is ſpoken, endeavour to obtain a clearer conception of it by a decent manner of inquiry. Do not charge the ſpeaker with obſcurity, either in his ſenſe or his words, but intreat his favour to relieve your own want of penetration, or to add an enlightening word or two, that you may take up his whole meaning.

If difficulties ariſe in your mind, and conſtrain your diſſent to the things ſpoken, repreſent what objections ſome perſons would be ready to make againſt the ſentiments of the ſpeaker, without telling him you oppoſe. This manner of addreſs carries ſomething more modeſt and obliging in it, than to appear to raiſe objections of your own by way of contradiction to him that ſpoke.

XIII. When you are forced to differ from him who delivers his ſenſe on any point, yet agree as far as you can, and repreſent how far you agree; and if there be any room for it, explain the words of the ſpeaker in ſuch a ſenſe to which you can in general aſſent and ſo agree with him: or at leaſt by a ſmall addition or alteration of his ſentiments ſhew your own ſenſe of things. It is the practice and delight of a candid hearer, to make it appear how unwilling he is to differ from him that ſpeaks. Let the ſpeaker know that it is nothing but truth conſtrains you to oppoſe him, and let that difference be always expreſt in few and civil and choſen words, ſuch as give the leaſt offence.

And be careful always to take Solomon's rule with you, and let your correſpondent fairly finiſh his ſpeech before you reply; for he that anſwereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and ſhame unto him, Prov. xviii. 13.

A little watchfulneſs, care, and practice in younger life, will render all theſe things more eaſy, familiar and natural to you, and will grow into habit.

XIV. As you ſhould carry about with you a conſtant and ſincere ſenſe of your own ignorance, ſo you ſhould not be afraid nor aſhamed to confeſs this ignorance, by taking all proper opportunities to aſk and inquire for farther information; whether it be the meaning of a word, the nature of a thing, the reaſon of a propoſition, the cuſtom of a nation, &c. never remain in ignorance for want of aſking.

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Many a perſon had arrived at ſome conſiderable degree of knowledge, if he had not been full of ſelf-conceit, and imagined that he had known enough already, or elſe was aſhamed to let others know that he was unacquainted with it. God and man are ready to teach the meek, the humble, and the ignorant; but he that fancies himſelf to know any particular ſubject well, or that will not venture to aſk a queſtion about it, ſuch a one will not put himſelf into the way of improvement by inquiry and diligence. A fool may be wiſer in his own conceit than ten men who can render a reaſon, and ſuch a one is very likely to be an everlaſting fool; and perhaps alſo it is a ſilly ſhame renders his folly incurable.

Stultorum incurata pudor malus ulcera celat.
Hor. Epiſt. 16. Lib. I.

In Engliſh thus:

If fools have ulcers, and their pride conceal'em;
They muſt have ulcers ſtill, for none can heal'em.

XV. Be not too forward, eſpecially in the younger part of life, to determine any queſtion in company with an infallible and peremptory ſentence, nor ſpeak with aſſuming airs, and with a deciſive tone of voice. A young man in the preſence of his elders ſhould rather hear and attend, and weigh the arguments which are brought for the proof or refutation of any doubtful propoſition: and when it is your turn to ſpeak, propoſe your thoughts rather in way of inquiry. By this means your mind will be kept in a fitter temper to receive truth, and you will be more ready to correct and improve your own ſentiments, where you have not been too poſitive in affirming them. But if you have magiſterially decided the point, you will find a ſecret unwillingneſs to retract, though you ſhould feel an inward conviction that you were in the wrong.

XVI. It is granted indeed, that a ſeaſon may happen, when ſome bold pretender to ſcience may aſſume haughty and poſitive airs to aſſert and vindicate a groſs

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and dangerous error, or to renounce and vilify ſome very important truth: and if he has a popular talent of talking, and there be no remonſtrance made againſt him, the company may be tempted too eaſily to give their aſſent to the impudence and infallibility of the preſumer. They may imagine a propoſition ſo much vilified can never be true, and that a doctrine which is ſo boldly cenſured and renounced can never be defended. Weak minds are too ready to perſuade themſelves, that a man would never talk with ſo much aſſurance unleſs he were certainly in the right, and could well maintain and prove what he ſaid. By this means truth itſelf is in danger of being betrayed or loſt, if there be no oppoſition made to ſuch a pretending talker.

Now, in ſuch a caſe, even a wiſe and a modeſt man may aſſume airs too, and repel inſolence with its own weapons. There is a time, as Solomon the wiſeſt of men teaches us, when a fool ſhould be anſwered according to his folly, leſt he be wiſe in his own conceit, and leſt others too eaſily yield up their faith and reaſon to his imperious dictates. Courage and poſitivity are never more neceſſary than on ſuch an occaſion. But it is good to join ſome argument with them of real and convincing force, and let it be ſtrongly pronounced too.

When ſuch a reſiſtance is made, you ſhall find ſome of theſe bold talkers will draw in their horns, when their fierce and feeble puſhes againſt truth and reaſon are repelled with puſhing and confidence. It is pity indeed that truth ſhould ever need ſuch ſort of defences; but we know that a triumphant aſſurance hath ſometimes ſupported groſs falſehoods, and a whole company have been captivated to error by this means, till ſome man with equal aſſurance has reſcued them. It is pity that any momentous point of doctrine ſhould happen to fall under ſuch reproaches, and require ſuch a mode of vindication: though if I happen to hear it, I ought not to turn my back, and to ſneak off in ſilence, and leave the truth to lie baffled, bleeding, and ſlain. Yet I muſt confeſs, I ſhould be glad to have no occaſion ever given me to fight with any man at this ſort

of

of weapons, even though I ſhould be ſo happy as to ſilence his inſolence, and obtain an evident victory.

XVII. Be not fond of diſputing every thing *pro* and *con*, nor indulge yourſelf to ſhew your talent of attacking and defending. A logic which teaches nothing elſe, is little worth. This temper and practice will lead you juſt ſo far out of the way of knowledge, and divert your honeſt inquiry after the truth which is debated or ſought. In ſet diſputes, every little ſtraw is often laid hold on to ſupport our own cauſe; every thing that can be drawn in any way to give colour to our argument is advanced, and that perhaps with vanity and oſtentation. This puts the mind out of a proper poſture to ſeek and receive the truth.

XVIII. Do not bring a warm party ſpirit into a free converſation, which is deſigned for mutual improvement in the ſearch of truth. Take heed of allowing yourſelf in thoſe ſelf-ſatisfied aſſurances, which keep the doors of the underſtanding barred faſt againſt the admiſſion of any new ſentiments. Let your ſoul be ever ready to hearken to further diſcoveries, from a conſtant and ruling conſciouſneſs of our preſent fallible and imperfect ſtate; and make it appear to your friends, that it is no hard taſk for you to learn and pronounce theſe little words, *I was miſtaken*, how hard ſoever it be for the bulk of mankind to pronounce them.

XIX. As you may ſometimes raiſe inquiries for your own inſtruction and improvement, and draw out the learning, wiſdom, and fine ſentiments of your friends, who perhaps may be too reſerved or modeſt; ſo at other times, if you perceive a perſon unſkilful in the matter of debate, you may by queſtions aptly propoſed in the Socratic method, lead him into a clearer knowledge of the ſubject: then you become his inſtructor in ſuch a manner as may not appear to make yourſelf his ſuperior.

XX. Take heed of affecting always to ſhine in company above the reſt, and to diſplay the riches of your own underſtanding or your oratory, as though you would render yourſelf admirable to all that are preſent. This is ſeldom well taken in polite company; much leſs ſhould you uſe ſuch forms of ſpeech as ſhould inſi-

nuate

nuate the ignorance or dulneſs of thoſe with whom you converſe.

XXI. THOUGH you ſhould not affect to flouriſh in a copious harangue and diffuſive ſtyle in company, yet neither ſhould you rudely interrupt and reproach him that happens to uſe it: but when he has done ſpeaking, reduce his ſentiments into a more contracted form; not with a ſhew of correcting, but as one who is doubtful whether you hit upon his true ſenſe or no. Thus matters may be brought more eaſily from a wild confuſion into a ſingle point, queſtions may be ſooner determined, and difficulties more readily removed.

XXII. Be not ſo ready to charge ignorance, prejudice, and miſtake upon others, as you are to ſuſpect yourſelf of it: and in order to ſhow how free you are from prejudices, learn to bear contradiction with patience: let it be eaſy to you to hear your own opinion ſtrongly oppoſed, eſpecially in matters which are doubtful and diſputable amongſt men of ſobriety and virtue. Give a patient hearing to arguments on all ſides, otherwiſe you give the company occaſion to ſuſpect that it is not the evidence of truth has led you into this opinion, but ſome lazy anticipation of judgment; ſome beloved preſumption, ſome long and raſh poſſeſſion of a party-ſcheme, in which you deſire to reſt undiſturbed. If your aſſent has been eſtabliſhed upon juſt and ſufficient grounds, why ſhould you be afraid to let the truth be put to the trial of argument?

XXIII. BANISH utterly out of all converſation, and eſpecially out of all learned and intellectual conference, every thing that tends to provoke paſſion, or riſe a fire in the blood. Let no ſharp language, no noiſy exclamation, no ſarcaſms or biting jeſts be heard among you; no perverſe or invidious conſequences be drawn from each other's opinions, and imputed to the perſon; let there be no wilful perverſion of another's meaning; no ſudden ſeizure of a lapſed ſyllable to play upon it, nor any abuſed conſtruction of an innocent miſtake: ſuffer not your tongue to inſult a modeſt opponent that begins to yield; let there be no crowing and triumph, even where there is evident victory on your ſide. All theſe things are enemies to friendſhip, and the ruin of

free converſation, The impartial ſearch of truth requires all calmneſs and ſerenity, all temper and candour: mutual inſtruction can never be attained in the midſt of paſſion, pride, and clamour, unleſs we ſuppoſe in the midſt of ſuch a ſcene there is a loud and penetrating lecture read by both ſides on the folly and ſhameful infirmities of human nature.

XXIV. Whensoever therefore any unhappy word ſhall ariſe in company that might give you a reaſonable diſguſt, quath the riſing reſentment, be it ever ſo juſt, and command your ſoul and your tongue into ſilence, leſt you cancel the hopes of all improvement for that hour, and transform the learned converſation into the mean and vulgar form of reproaches and railing. The man who begun to break the peace in ſuch a ſociety, will fall under the ſhame and conviction of ſuch a ſilent reproof, if he has any thing ingenuous about him. If this ſhould not be ſufficient, let a grave admonition, or a ſoft and gentle turn of wit, with an air of pleaſantry, give the warm diſputer an occaſion to ſtop the progreſs of his indecent fire, if not to retract the indecency, and quench the flame.

XXV. Inure yourſelf to a candid and obliging manner in all your converſation, and acquire the art of pleaſing addreſs, even when you teach as well as when you learn, and when you oppoſe as well as when you aſſert or prove. This degree of politeneſs is not to be attained without a diligent attention to ſuch kind of directions as are here laid down, and a frequent exerciſe and practice of them.

XXVI. If you would know what ſort of companions you ſhould ſelect for the cultivation and advantage of the mind, the general rule is, chooſe ſuch as by their brightneſs of parts, and their diligence in ſtudy, or by their ſuperior advancement in learning, or peculiar excellency in any art, ſcience, or accompliſhment, divine or human, may be capable of adminiſtering to your improvement; and be ſure to maintain and keep ſome due regard to their moral character always, leſt while you wander in queſt of intellectual gain, you fall into the contagion of irreligion and vice. No wiſe man would venture

venture into a houſe infected with the plague, in order to ſee the fineſt collections of any virtuoſo in Europe.

XXVII. Nor is it every ſober perſon of your acquaintance, no, nor every man of bright parts, or rich in learning, that is fit to engage in free converſation for the inquiry after truth. Let a perſon have ever ſo illuſtrious talents, yet he is not a proper aſſociate for ſuch a purpoſe, if he lie under any of the following infirmities.

(1.) If he be exceedingly reſerved, and hath either no inclination to diſcourſe, or no tolerable capacity of ſpeech and language for the communication of his ſentiments.

(2.) If he be haughty and proud of his knowledge, imperious in his airs, and is always fond of impoſing his ſentiments on all the company.

(3.) If he be poſitive and dogmatical in his own opinions, and will diſpute to the end; if he will reſiſt the brighteſt evidence of truth rather than ſuffer himſelf to be overcome, or yield to the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt reaſonings.

(4.) If he be one who always affects to outſhine all the company, and delights to hear himſelf talk and flouriſh upon a ſubject, and make long harangues, while the reſt muſt be all ſilent and attentive.

(5.) If he be a perſon of a whiffling and unſteady turn of mind, who cannot keep cloſe to a point of controverſy, but wanders from it perpetually, and is always ſolicitous to ſay ſomething, whether it be pertinent to the queſtion or no.

(6.) If he be fretful and peeviſh, and given to reſentment upon all occaſions; if he knows not how to bear contradiction, or is ready to take things in a wrong ſenſe; if he is ſwift to feel a ſuppoſed offence, or to imagine himſelf affronted, and then break out into a ſudden paſſion, or retain ſilent and ſullen wrath.

(7.) If he affect wit on all occaſions, and is full of his conceits and puns, quirks or quibbles, jeſts and repartees; theſe may agreeably entertain and animate an hour of mirth, but they have no place in the ſearch after truth.

(8.) If he carry always about him a ſort of craft, and cunning, and diſguiſe, and act rather like a ſpy than a friend. Have care of ſuch a one as will make an ill uſe of freedom in converſation, and immediately charge herely upon you, when you happen to differ from thoſe ſentiments which authority or cuſtom has eſtabliſhed.

In ſhort, you ſhould avoid the man, in ſuch ſelect converſation, who practiſes any thing that is unbecoming the character of a ſincere, free, and open ſearcher after truth.

Now, though you may pay all the relative duties of life to perſons of theſe unhappy qualifications, and treat them with decency and love, ſo far as religion and humanity oblige you, yet take care of entering into a free debate on matters of truth or falſehood in their company, and eſpecially about the principles of religion. I confeſs, if a perſon of ſuch a temper happens to judge and talk well on ſuch a ſubject, you may hear him with attention, and derive what profit you can from his diſcourſe; but he is by no means to be choſen for a free conference in matters of inquiry and knowledge.

XXVIII. While I would perſuade you to beware of ſuch perſons, and abſtain from too much freedom of diſcourſe amongſt them, it is very natural to infer that you ſhould watch againſt the working of theſe evil qualities in your own breaſt, if you happen to be tainted with any of them yourſelf. Men of learning and ingenuity will juſtly avoid your acquaintance, when they find ſuch an unhappy and unſociable temper prevailing in you.

XXIX. To conclude: when you retire from company, then converſe with yourſelf in ſolitude, and inquire what you have learnt for the improvement of your underſtanding, or for the rectifying your inclination, for the increaſe of your virtues, or the meliorating your conduct and behaviour in any future parts of life. If you have ſeen ſome of your company candid, modeſt, humble in their manner, wiſe and ſagacious, juſt and pious in their ſentiments, polite and graceful, as well as clear and ſtrong in their expreſſion, and univerſally acceptable

able and lovely in their behaviour, endeavour to impreſs the idea of all theſe upon your memory, and treaſure them up for your imitation.

XXX. If the laws of reaſon, decency, and civility have not been well obſerved amongſt your aſſociates, take notice of thoſe defects for your own improvement: and from every occurrence of this kind, remark ſomething to imitate or to avoid, in elegant, polite and uſeful converſation. Perhaps you will find that ſome perſons preſent have really diſpleaſed the company, by an exceſſive and too viſible an affectation to please, *i. e.* by giving looſe to ſervile flattery, or promiſcuous praiſe; while others were as ready to oppoſe and contradict every thing that was ſaid. Some have deſerved juſt cenſure for a moroſe and affected taciturnity, and others have been anxious and careful leſt their ſilence ſhould be interpreted a want of ſenſe, and therefore they have ventured to make ſpeeches, though they had nothing to ſay which was worth hearing. Perhaps you will obſerve, that one was ingenious in his thoughts and bright in his language, but he was ſo top-full of himſelf, that he let it ſpill on all the company; that he ſpoke well indeed, but that he ſpoke too long, and did not allow equal time or liberty to his aſſociates. You will remark, that another was full charged to let out his words before his friend had done ſpeaking, or impatient of the leaſt oppoſition to any thing he ſaid. You will remember that ſome perſons have talked at large, and with great confidence, of things which they underſtood not, and others counted every thing tedious and intolerable that was ſpoken upon ſubjects out of their ſphere, and they would fain confine the conference entirely within the limits of their own narrow knowledge and ſtudy. The errors of converſation are almoſt infinite.

XXXI. By a review of ſuch irregularities as theſe, you may learn to avoid thoſe follies and pieces of ill conduct which ſpoil good converſation, or make it leſs agreeable and leſs uſeful; and by degrees you will acquire that delightful and eaſy manner of addreſs and behaviour in all uſeful correſpondences, which may render your company every where deſired and beloved;

and at the ſame time among the beſt of your companions you may make the higheſt improvement in your own intellectual acquiſitions, that the diſcourſe of mortal creatures will allow, under all our diſadvantages in this ſorry ſtate of mortality. But there is a day coming, when we ſhall be ſeized away from this lower claſs in the ſchool of knowledge, where we labour under the many dangers and darkneſſes, the errors and the incumbrances of fleſh and blood, and our converſation ſhall be with angels, and more illuminated ſpirits in the upper regions of the univerſe.

CHAP. X.

Of Diſputes.

I.

UNDER the general head of converſation for the improvement of the mind, we may rank the practice of diſputing; that is, when two or more perſons appear to maintain different ſentiments, and defend their own, or oppoſe the other's opinion, in alternate diſcourſe, by ſome methods of argument.

II. As theſe diſputes often ariſe in good earneſt, where the two contenders do really believe the different propoſitions which they ſupport; ſo ſometimes they are appointed as mere trials of ſkill in academies, or ſchools, by the ſtudents: ſometimes they are practiſed, and that with apparent fervour in courts of judicature by lawyers, in order to gain the fees of their different clients, while both ſides perhaps are really of the ſame ſentiment with regard to the cauſe which is tried.

III. In common converſation, diſputes are often managed without any forms or regularity or order, and they turn to good or evil purpoſes, chiefly according to the temper of the diſputants. They may ſometimes be ſucceſsful to ſearch out truth, ſometimes effectual to maintain truth, and convince the miſtaken, but at other times a diſpute is a mere ſcene of battle in order to victory and vain triumph.

VI.

IV. THERE are ſome few general rules which ſhould be obſerved in all debates whatſoever, if we would find out truth by them, or convince a friend of his error, even though they be not managed according to any ſettled forms of diſputation: and as there are almoſt as many opinions and judgments of things as there are perſons, ſo when ſeveral perſons happen to meet and confer together upon any ſubject, they are ready to declare their different ſentiments, and ſupport them by ſuch reaſonings as they are capable of. This is called debating, or diſputing, as is above deſcribed.

V. WHEN perſons begin a debate, they ſhould always take care that they are agreed in ſome general principles or propoſitions, which either more nearly or remotely affect the queſtion in hand: for otherwiſe they have no foundation or hope of convincing each other; they muſt have ſome common ground to ſtand upon while they maintain the conteſt.

When they find they agree in ſome remote propoſitions, then let them ſearch farther, and inquire how near they approach to each other's ſentiments; and whatſoever propoſitions they agree in, let theſe lay a foundation for the mutual hope of conviction. Hereby you will be prevented from running at every turn to ſome original and remote propoſitions and axioms, which practice both entangles and prolongs a diſpute. As for inſtance, if there was a debate propoſed betwixt a Proteſtant and a Papiſt, whether there be ſuch a place as Purgatory? Let them remember that they both agree in this point, that Chriſt has made ſatisfaction or atonement for ſin, and upon this ground let them both ſtand, while they ſearch out the controverted doctrine of Purgatory by way of conference or debate.

VI. THE queſtion ſhould be cleared from all doubtful terms and needleſs additions; and all things that belong to the queſtion ſhould be expreſſed in plain and intelligible language. This is ſo neceſſary a thing, that without it men will be expoſed to ſuch ſort of ridiculous conteſts as was found one day between the two unlearned combatants, Sartor and Sutor, who aſſaulted and defended the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation with much

much zeal and violence: but Latino happening to come into their company, and inquiring the ſubject of their diſpute, aſked each of them what he meant by that long hard word tranſubſtantiation. Sutor readily informed him, that he underſtood bowing at the name of Jeſus: but Sartor aſſured him, that he meant nothing but bowing at the high altar: "No wonder then," ſaid Latino, "that you cannot agree, when you neither "underſtand one another, nor the word about which "you contend." I think the whole family of the Sartors and Sutors would be wiſer if they avoided ſuch kind of debates, till they underſtood the terms better. But alas! even their wives carry on ſuch conferences; the other day one was heard in the ſtreet explaining to her leſs learned neighbour the meaning of metaphyſical ſcience; and ſhe aſſured her, that as phyſics were medicines for the body, ſo metaphyſics was phyſic for the ſoul: upon this they went on to diſpute the point, how far the divine excelled the doctor.

Auditum admiſſi riſum teneatis amici?
Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat? Hor.

Can it be faulty to repeat
A dialogue that walk'd the ſtreet?
Or can my graveſt friends forbear
A laugh, when ſuch diſputes they hear?

VII. And not only the ſenſe and meaning of the words uſed in the queſtion ſhould be ſettled and adjuſted between the diſputants, but the preciſe point of inquiry ſhould be diſtinctly fixed; the queſtion in debate ſhould be limited preciſely to its ſpecial extent, or declared to be taken in its more general ſenſe. As for inſtance, if two men are contending whether civil government be of divine right or no; here it muſt be obſerved, the queſtion is not whether monarchy in one man, or a republic in multitudes of the people, or an ariſtocracy in a few of the chief, is appointed of God as neceſſary; but whether civil government in its moſt general ſenſe, or in any form whatſoever, is derived from the will and

and appointment of God? Again, the point of inquiry ſhould be limited further. Thus, the queſtion is not whether government comes from the will of God by the light of revelation, for that is granted; but whether it is derived from the will of God by the light of reaſon too. This ſort of ſpecification or limitation of the queſtion hinders and prevents the diſputers from wandering away from the preciſe point of inquiry.

It is this trifling humour or diſhoneſt artifice of changing the queſtion, and wandering away from the firſt point of debate, which gives endleſs length to diſputes, and cauſes both the diſputants to part without any ſatisfaction. And one chief occaſion of it is this; when one of the combatants feels his cauſe run low and fail, and is juſt ready to be confuted and demoliſhed, he is tempted to ſtep aſide to avoid the blow, and betakes him to a different queſtion; thus, if his adverſary be not well aware of him, he begins to entrench himſelf in a new faſtneſs, and holds out the ſiege with a new artillery of thoughts and words. It is the pride of man which is the ſpring of this evil, and an unwillingneſs to yield up their own opinions even to be overcome by truth itſelf.

VIII. KEEP this always therefore upon your mind as an everlaſting rule of conduct in your debates to find out truth, that a reſolute deſign, or even a warm affectation of victory, is the bane of all real improvement, and an effectual bar againſt the admiſſion of the truth which you profeſs to ſeek. This works with a ſecret, but a powerful and miſchievous influence in every diſpute, unleſs we are much upon our guard. It appears in frequent converſation: every age, every ſex, and each party of mankind, are ſo fond of being in the right, that they know not how to renounce this unhappy prejudice, this vain love of victory.

When truth with bright evidence is ready to break in upon a diſputant, and to overcome his objections and miſtakes, how ſwift and ready is the mind to engage wit and fancy, craft and ſubtilty, to cloud and perplex and puzzle the truth, if poſſible? How eager is he to throw in ſome impertinent queſtion to divert from the main ſubject? How ſwift to take hold of

ſome

ſome occaſional word, thereby to lead the diſcourſe off from the point in hand? So much afraid is human nature of parting with its errors, and being overcome by truth. Juſt thus a hunted hare calls up all the ſhifts that nature hath taught her, ſhe treads back her mazes, croſſes and confounds her former track, and uſes all poſſible methods to divert the ſcent, when ſhe is in danger of being ſeized and taken. Let puſs practiſe what nature teaches; but would one imagine, that any rational being ſhould take ſuch pains to avoid truth, and to eſcape the improvement of its underſtanding!

IX. When you come to a diſpute in order to find out truth, do not preſume that you are certainly poſſeſſed of it beforehand. Enter the debate with a ſincere deſign of yielding to reaſon, on which ſide ſoever it appears. Uſe no ſubtile arts to cloud and entangle the queſtion; hide not yourſelf in doubtful words and phraſes; do not affect little ſhifts and ſubterfuges to avoid the force of an argument; take a generous pleaſure to eſpy the firſt riſing beams of truth, though it be on the ſide of your opponent: endeavour to remove the little obſcurities that hang about it, and ſuffer and encourage it to break out into open and convincing light; that while your opponent perhaps may gain the better of your reaſonings, yet you yourſelf may triumph over error, and I am ſure that is a much more valuable acquiſition and victory.

X. Watch narrowly in every diſpute, that your opponent does not lead you unwarily to grant ſome principle or propoſition, which will bring with it a fatal conſequence, and lead you inſenſibly into his ſentiment, though it be far aſtray from the truth: and by this wrong ſtep you will be, as it were, plunged into dangerous errors before you are aware. Polonides in free converſation led Incauta to agree with him in this plain propoſition, that the bleſſed God has too much juſtice in any caſe to puniſh* any being who is in itſelf innocent; till he not only allowed it with unthinking alacrity, but aſſerted it in moſt univerſal and unguarded terms. A little after Polonides came in diſcourſe to commend the virtues,

* The word puniſh here ſignifies, to bring ſome natural evil upon a perſon on account of moral evil done.

virtues, the innocence, and the piety of our bleſſed Saviour; and thence inferred, it was impoſſible that God ſhould ever puniſh ſo holy a perſon, who was never guilty of any crime: then Incauto eſpied the ſnare, and found himſelf robbed and defrauded of the great doctrine of the atonement by the death of Chriſt, upon which he had placed his immortal hopes according to the goſpel.

This taught him to bethink himſelf what a dangerous conceſſion he had made in ſo univerſal a manner, that God would never puniſh any being who was innocent, and he ſaw it needful to recall his words, or to explain them better, by adding this reſtriction or limitation, viz. Unleſs this innocent being were ſome way involved in another's ſin, or ſtood as a voluntary ſurety for the guilty: by this limitation he ſecured the great and bleſſed doctrine of the ſacrifice of Chriſt for the ſins of men, and learnt to be more cautious in his conceſſions for time to come.

Two months ago Fatalio had almoſt tempted his friend Fidens to leave off prayer, and to abandon his dependence on the providence of God in the common affairs of life, by obtaining of him a conceſſion of the like kind. Is it not evident to reaſon, ſays Fatalio, that God's immenſe ſcheme of tranſactions in the univerſe was contrived and determined long before you and I were born? Can you imagine, my dear Fidens, that the bleſſed God changes his original contrivances, and makes new interruptions in the courſe of them ſo often as you and I want his aid, to prevent the little accidents of life, or to guard us from them? Can you ſuffer yourſelf to be perſuaded, that the great Creator of this world takes care to ſupport a bridge which was quite rotten, and to make it ſtand firm a few minutes longer till you have rode over it? Or will he uphold a falling tower while we two were paſſing by it, that ſuch worms as you and I are might eſcape the ruin?

But you ſay, you prayed for his protection in the morning, and he certainly hears prayer. I grant he knows it; but are you ſo fond and weak, ſaid he, as to ſuppoſe that the univerſal Lord of all had ſuch a regard to a word or two of your breath, as to make alterations in his own eternal ſcheme upon that account?

Nor

Nor is there any other way whereby his providence can preſerve you in anſwer to prayer, but by creating ſuch perpetual interruptions and changes in his own conduct according to your daily behaviour.

I acknowledge, ſays Fidens, there is no other way to ſecure the doctrine of divine providence in all theſe common affairs; and therefore I begin to doubt whether God does or ever will exert himſelf ſo particularly in our little concerns.

Have a care, good Fidens, that you yield not too far: take heed leſt you have granted too much to Fatalio. Pray let me aſk of you, Could not the great God, who graſps and ſurveys all future and diſtant things in one ſingle view, could not he from the beginning foreſee your morning prayer for his protection, and appoint all ſecond cauſes to concur for the ſupport of that crazy bridge, or to make that old tower ſtand firm till you had eſcaped the danger? Or could not he cauſe all the mediums to work ſo as to make it fall before you come near it? Can he not appoint all his own tranſactions in the univerſe, and every event in the natural world, in a way of perfect correſpondence with his own fore-knowledge of all the events, actions, and appearances of the moral world in every part of it? Can he not direct every thing in nature, which is but his ſervant, to act in perfect agreement with his eternal preſcience of our ſins, or of our piety? And hereby all the glory of providence, and our neceſſary dependence upon it by faith and prayer, are as well ſecured, as if he interpoſed to alter his own ſcheme every moment.

Let me aſk again, Did not he in his own counſels or decrees appoint thunders and lightnings, and earthquakes, to burn up and deſtroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and turn them into a dead ſea, juſt at the time when the iniquities of thoſe cities were raiſed to their ſupreme height? Did he not ordain the fountains of the deep to be broken up, and overwhelming rains to fall down from heaven, juſt when a guilty world deſerved to be drowned; while he took care of the ſecurity of righteous Noah, by an ark which ſhould float upon that very deluge of waters? Thus he can puniſh the criminal when he pleaſes, and reward the devout worſhip-

per

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per in the proper ſeaſon, by his original and eternal ſchemes of appointment, as well as if he interpoſed every moment anew. Take heed, Fidens, that you be not tempted away by ſuch ſophiſms of Fatalio to with-hold prayer from God, and to renounce your faith in his providence.

Remember this ſhort and plain caution of the ſubtile errors of men. Let a ſnake but once thruſt in his head at ſome ſmall unguarded fold of your garment, and he will inſenſibly and unavoidably wind his whole body into your boſom, and give you a pernicious wound.

XI. On the other hand, when you have found your opponent make any ſuch conceſſion as may turn to your real advantage in maintaining the truth, be wiſe and watchful to obſerve it, and make a happy improvement of it. Rhapſodus has taken a great deal of pains to detract from the honour of Chriſtianity, by ſly inſinuations that the ſacred writers are perpetually promoting virtue and piety by promiſes and threatenings; whereas neither the fear of future puniſhment, nor the hope of future reward, can poſſibly be called good affections, or ſuch as are the acknowledged ſprings and ſources of all actions truly good. He adds further, that this fear, or this hope, cannot conſiſt in reality with virtue or goodneſs, if it either ſtands as eſſential to any moral performance, or as a conſiderable motive to any good action: and thus he would fain lead Chriſtians to be aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, becauſe of its future and eternal promiſes and threatenings, as being inconſiſtent with his notion of virtue; for he ſuppoſes virtue ſhould be ſo beloved and practiſed for the ſake of its own beauty and lovelineſs, that all other motives ariſing from rewards or puniſhments, fear or hope, do really take away juſt ſo much from the very nature of virtue as their influence reaches to: and no part of thoſe good practices are really valuable, but what ariſes from the mere love of virtue itſelf, without any regard to puniſhment or reward.

But obſerve in two pages afterwards, he grants that this principle of fear of future puniſhment, and hope of future reward, how mercenary and ſervile ſoever it may be accounted, is yet in many circumſtances a great ad-

vantage, ſecurity, and ſupport to virtue; eſpecially where there is danger of the violence of rage or luſt, or any counter-working paſſion to control and overcome the good affections of the mind.

Now the rule and the practice of Chriſtianity, or the goſpel, as it is cloſely connected with future rewards and puniſhments, may be well ſupported by this conceſſion. Pray, Rhapſodus, tell me, if every man in this preſent life, by the violence of ſome counter-working paſſion, may not have his good affections to virtue controlled or overcome? May not therefore his eternal fears and hopes be a great advantage, ſecurity, and ſupport to virtue in ſo dangerous a ſtate and ſituation, as our journey through this world towards a better? And this is all that the defence of Chriſtianity neceſſarily requires.

And yet further, let me aſk our rhapſodiſt, if you have nothing elſe, Sir, but the beauty, and excellency, and lovelineſs of virtue to preach and flouriſh upon, before ſuch ſorry and degenerate creatures as the bulk of mankind are, and you have no future rewards or puniſhments with which to addreſs their hopes and fears, how many of theſe vicious wretches will you ever reclaim from all their varieties of profaneneſs, intemperance and madneſs: How many have you ever actually reclaimed by this ſmooth ſoft method, and theſe fine words? What has all that reaſoning and rhetoric done which have been diſplayed by your predeceſſors the Heathen moraliſts, upon this excellency and beauty of virtue? What has it been able to do towards the reforming of a ſinful world? Perhaps now and then a man of better natural mould has been a little refined, and perhaps alſo there may have been here and there a man reſtrained or recovered from injuſtice and knavery, from drunkenneſs and lewdneſs, and vile debaucheries, by this fair reaſoning and philoſophy: but have the paſſions of revenge and envy, of ambition and pride, and the inward ſecret vices of the mind, been mortified merely by this philoſophical language? Have any of theſe men been made new creatures, men of real piety and love to God?

Go

with the ſentiments which we have choſen, and has ſuch a tender feeling of all the oppoſition which is made to them, that perſonal brawls are very ready to come in as ſeconds, to ſucceed and finiſh the diſpute of opinions. Then noiſe and clamour and folly appear in all their ſhapes, and chaſe reaſon and truth out of ſight.

How unhappy is the caſe of frail and wretched mankind in this dark or duſky ſtate of ſtrong paſſion and glimmering reaſon? How ready are we, when our paſſions are engaged in the diſpute, to conſider more what loads of nonſenſe and reproach we can lay upon our opponent, than what reaſon and truth require in the controverſy itſelf. Diſmal are the conſequences mankind are too often involved in by this evil principle; it is this common and dangerous practice that carries the heart aſide from all that is fair and honeſt in our ſearch after truth, or the propagation of it in the world. One would wiſh from one's very ſoul, that none of the Chriſtian fathers had been guilty of ſuch follies as theſe.

But St Jerome fairly confeſſes this evil principle, in his apology for himſelf to Pammachius, that he had not ſo much regarded what was exactly to be ſpoken in the controverſy he had in hand, as what was fit to lay a load on Jovinian. And, indeed, I fear this was the vile cuſtom of many of the writers even in the church-affairs of thoſe times. But it will be a double ſcandal upon us in our more enlightened age, if we will allow ourſelves in a conduct ſo criminal and diſhoneſt. Happy ſouls, who keep ſuch a ſacred dominion over their inferior and animal powers, and all the influences of pride and ſecular intereſt, that the ſenſitive tumults, or theſe vicious influences, never riſe to diſturb the ſuperior and better operations of the reaſoning mind!

XIV. THESE general directions are neceſſary, or at leaſt uſeful in all debates whatſoever, whether they ariſe in occaſional converſation, or are appointed at any certain time or place; whether they are managed with or without any formal rules to govern them. But there are three ſorts of diſputation in which there are ſome forms and orders obſerved, and which are diſtinguiſhed

by these three names, *viz. Socratic, Forensic*, and *Academic*, i. e. the disputes of the schools.

Concerning each of these it may not be improper to discourse a little, and give a few particular directions or remarks about them.

CHAP. XI.

The Socratical Way of Disputation.

I.

THIS method of dispute derives its name from Socrates, by whom it was practised, and by other philosophers in his age, long before Aristotle invented the particular forms of syllogism in mood and figure, which are now used in scholastic disputations.

II. The Socratical way is managed by questions and answers in such a manner as this, *viz.* If I would lead a person into the belief of a heaven and a hell, or a future state of rewards and punishments, I might begin in some such manner of inquiry, and suppose the most obvious and easy answers.

Quest. Does not God govern the world?

Ans. Surely he that made it governs it.

Quest. Is not God both a good and a righteous governor?

Ans. Both these characters doubtless belong to him.

Quest. What is the true notion of a good and righteous governor?

Ans. That he punishes the wicked, and rewards the good.

Quest. Are the good always rewarded in this life?

Ans. No surely, for many virtuous men are miserable here, and greatly afflicted.

Quest. Are the wicked always punished in this life?

Ans. No certainly, for many of them live without sorrow, and some of the vilest of men are often raised to great riches and honour.

Quest. Wherein then doth God make it appear that he is good and righteous?

Ans.

Anſ. I own there is but little appearance of it on earth.

Queſt. Will there not be a time then when the tables ſhall be turned, and the ſcene of things changed, ſince God governs mankind righteouſly?

Anſ. Doubtleſs, there muſt be a proper time, wherein God will make that goodneſs and that righteouſneſs to appear.

Queſt. If this be not before their death, how can it be done?

Anſ. I can think of no other way but by ſuppoſing man to have ſome exiſtence after this life.

Queſt. Are you not convinced then that there muſt be a ſtate of reward and punithment after death?

Anſ. Yes ſurely, I now ſee plainly that the goodneſs and righteouſneſs of God, as governor of the world, neceſſarily require it.

III. Now the advantages of this method are very conſiderable.

1. It repreſents the form of a dialogue or common converſation, which is a much more eaſy, more pleaſant, and a more ſprightly way of inſtruction, and more fit to excite the attention and ſharpen the penetration of the learner, than ſolitary reading or ſilent attention to a lecture. Man being a ſociable creature, delights more in converſation, and learns better this way, if it could always be wiſely and happily practiſed.

2. This method hath ſomething very obliging in it, and carries a very humble and condeſcending air, when he that inſtructs ſeems to be the inquirer, and ſeeks information from him who learns.

3. It leads the learner into the knowledge of truth as it were by his own invention, which is a very pleaſing thing to human nature; and by queſtions pertinently and artificially propoſed, it does as effectually draw him on to diſcover his own miſtakes, which he is much more eaſily perſuaded to relinquiſh when he ſeems to have diſcovered them himſelf.

4. It is managed in a great meaſure in the form of the moſt eaſy reaſoning, always ariſing from ſomething aſſerted or known in the foregoing anſwer, and ſo proceeding to inquire ſomething unknown in the following queſtion, which again makes way for the next anſwer.

Now

Now ſuch an exerciſe is very alluring and entertaining to the underſtanding, while its own reaſoning powers are all along employed; and that without labour or difficulty, becauſe the queriſt finds out and propoſes all the intermediate ideas or middle terms.

IV. There is a method very near a-kin to this, which has much obtained of late, viz. writing controverſies by queſtions only, or confirming or refuting any poſition, or perſuading to or dehorting from any practice, by the mere propoſal of queries. The anſwer to them is ſuppoſed to be ſo plain and ſo neceſſary, that they are not expreſſed, becauſe the query itſelf carries a convincing argument in it, and ſeems to determine what the anſwer muſt be.

V. If Chriſtian catechiſms could be framed in the manner of a Socratical diſpute by queſtion and anſwer, it would wonderfully enlighten the minds of children, and it would improve their intellectual and reaſoning powers, at the ſame time that it leads them into the knowledge of religion: and it is upon one account well ſuited to the capacity of children; for the queſtions may be pretty numerous, and the queriſt muſt not proceed too ſwiftly towards the determination of his point propoſed, that he may with more eaſe, with brighter evidence, and with ſurer ſucceſs, draw the learner on to aſſent to thoſe principles ſtep by ſtep, from whence the final concluſion will naturally ariſe. The only inconvenience would be this, that if children were to reaſon out all their way entirely into the knowledge of every part of their religion, it would draw common catechiſms into too large a volume for their leiſure, attention, or memory.

Yet thoſe who explain their catechiſms to them may, by due application and forethought, inſtruct them in this manner.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of Forenſic Diſputes.

I.

THE Forum was a public place in Rome where lawyers and orators made their ſpeeches before the proper judge in matters of property, or in criminal caſes, to accuſe or excuſe, to complain or defend: thence all ſorts of diſputations in public aſſemblies or courts of juſtice, where ſeveral perſons make their diſtinct ſpeeches for or againſt any perſon or thing whatſoever, but more eſpecially in civil matters, may come under the name of forenſic diſputes.

II. THIS is practiſed not only in the courts of judicature, where a ſingle perſon ſits to judge of the truth or goodneſs of any cauſe, and to determine according to the weight of reaſons on either ſide; but it is uſed alſo in political ſenates or parliaments, eccleſiaſtical ſynods, and aſſemblies of various kinds.

In theſe aſſemblies generally one perſon is choſen chairman or moderator, not to give a determination to the controverſy, but chiefly to keep the ſeveral ſpeakers to the rules of order and decency in their conduct; but the final determination of the queſtions ariſes from the majority of opinions or votes in the aſſembly, according as they are or ought to be ſwayed by the ſuperior weight of reaſon appearing in the ſeveral ſpeeches that are made.

III. THE method of proceeding is uſually in ſome ſuch form as this. The firſt perſon who ſpeaks when the court is ſet, opens the caſe either more briefly or at large, and propoſes the caſe to the judge or the chairman, or moderator of the aſſembly, and gives his own reaſons for his opinion in the caſe propoſed.

IV. THIS perſon is ſucceeded by one, or perhaps two or ſeveral more, who paraphraſe on the ſame ſubject, and argue on the ſame ſide of the queſtion; they confirm what the firſt has ſpoken, and urge new reaſons to enforce the ſame: then thoſe who are of a different

ferent opinion ſtand up and make their ſeveral ſpeeches in a ſucceſſion, oppoſing the cauſe which others have maintained, giving their reaſons againſt it, and endeavouring to refute the arguments whereby the firſt ſpeakers have ſupported it.

V. After this, one and another riſes up to make their replies, to vindicate or to condemn, to eſtabliſh or to confute what has been offered before on each ſide of the queſtion; till at laſt, according to the rules, orders, cuſtoms of the court or aſſembly, the controverſy is decided, either by a ſingle judge or the ſuffrage of the aſſembly.

VI. Where the queſtion or matter in debate conſiſts of ſeveral parts, after it is once opened by the firſt or ſecond ſpeaker, ſometimes thoſe who follow take each of them a particular part of the debate, according to their inclination or their prior agreement, and apply themſelves to argue upon that ſingle point only, that ſo the whole complexion of the debate may not be thrown into confuſion by the variety of ſubjects, if every ſpeaker ſhould handle all the ſubjects of debate.

VII. Before the final ſentence or determination is given, it is uſual to have the reaſons and arguments, which have been offered on both ſides, ſummed up and repreſented in a more compendious manner; and this is done either by the appointed judge of the court, or the chairman, or ſome noted perſon in the aſſembly, that ſo judgment may proceed upon the fulleſt ſurvey of the whole ſubject, that as far as poſſible in human affairs nothing may be done contrary to truth or juſtice.

VIII. As this is a practice in which multitudes of gentleman, beſides thoſe of the learned profeſſions, may be engaged, at leaſt in their maturer years of life, ſo it would be a very proper and uſeful thing to introduce this cuſtom into our academies, viz. to propoſe caſes, and let the ſtudents debate them in a forenſic manner in the preſence of their tutors. There was ſomething of this kind practiſed by the Roman youth in their ſchools, in order to train them up for orators, both in the forum and in the ſenate. Perhaps Juvenal gives ſome hints of it when he ſays,

——————— *et nos*
Conſilium dedimus Sylæ, privatus ut altum
Dormiret ——————— Sat. 1.

Where with men-boys I ſtrove to get renown,
Adviſing Sylla to a private gown,
That he might ſleep the ſounder.

Sometimes theſe were aſſigned to the boys as ſingle ſubjects of a theme or declamation: ſo the ſame poet ſpeaks ſarcaſtically to Hannibal,

——— *I demens, et ſævas curre per Alpes,*
Ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias. Sat. 10.

Go climb the rugged Alps, ambitious fool,
To pleaſe the boys and be a theme at ſchool.

See more of this matter in Kennet's Antiquities of Rome, in the ſecond Eſſay on the Roman Education.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Academic or Scholaſtic Diſputation.

THE common methods in which diſputes are managed in the ſchools of learning are theſe, viz.

I. THE tutor appoints a queſtion in ſome of the ſciences to be debated amongſt his ſtudents: one of them undertakes to affirm or deny the queſtion, and to defend his aſſertion or negation, and to anſwer all objections againſt it; he is called the reſpondent: and the reſt of the ſtudents in the ſame claſs, or who purſue the ſame ſcience, are the opponents, who are appointed to diſpute or raiſe objections againſt the propoſition thus affirmed or denied.

II. EACH of the ſtudents ſucceſſively in their turn becomes the reſpondent or the defender of that propoſition, while the reſt oppoſe it alſo ſucceſſively in their turns.

III.

III. It is the buſineſs of the reſpondent to write a theſis in Latin, or ſhort diſcourſe on the queſtion propoſed; and he either affirms or denies the queſtion according to the opinion of the tutor, which is ſuppoſed to be the truth, and he reads it at the beginning of the diſpute.

IV. In his diſcourſe, (which is written with as great accuracy as the youth is capable of,) he explains the terms of the queſtion, frees them from all ambiguity, fixes their ſenſe, declares the true intent and meaning of the queſtion itſelf, ſeparates it from other queſtions with which it may have been complicated, and diſtinguiſhes it from other queſtions which may happen to be a-kin to it, and then pronounces in the negative or affirmative concerning it.

V. When this is done, then in the ſecond part of his diſcourſe he gives his own ſtrongeſt arguments to confirm the propoſition he has laid down, *i. e.* to vindicate his own ſide of the queſtion: but he does not uſually proceed to repreſent the objections againſt it, and to ſolve or anſwer them; for it is the buſineſs of the other ſtudents to raiſe objections in diſputing.

VI. Note, In ſome ſchools, the reſpondent is admitted to talk largely upon the queſtion with many flouriſhes and illuſtrations, to introduce great authorities from ancient and modern writings for the ſupport of it, and to ſcatter Latin reproaches in abundance on all thoſe who are of a different ſentiment. But this is not always permitted, nor ſhould it indeed be ever indulged, leſt it teach youth to reproach inſtead of reaſoning.

VII. When the reſpondent has read over his theſis in the ſchool, the junior ſtudent makes an objection, and draws it up in the regular form of a ſyllogiſm: the reſpondent repeats the objection, and either denies the major or minor propoſition directly, or he diſtinguiſhes upon ſome word or phraſe in the major or minor, and ſhews in what ſenſe the propoſition may be true, but that that ſenſe does not affect the queſtion; and then declares that in the ſenſe which affects the preſent queſtion, the propoſition is not true, and conſequently he denies it.

VIII.

VIII. THEN the opponent proceeds by another syllogiſm to vindicate the propoſition that is denied; again the reſpondent anſwers by denying or diſtinguiſhing.

Thus the diſputation goes on in a ſeries or ſucceſſion of ſyllogiſms and anſwers, till the objector is ſilenced, and has no more to ſay.

IX. WHEN he can go no further, the next ſtudent begins to propoſe his objection, and then the third and the fourth, even to the ſenior, who is the laſt opponent.

X. DURING this time, the tutor ſits in the chair as preſident or moderator, to ſee that the rules of diſputation and decency be obſerved on both ſides; and to admoniſh each diſputant of any irregularity in their conduct. His work is alſo to illuſtrate and explain the anſwer or diſtinction of the reſpondent where it is obſcure, to ſtrengthen it where it is weak, and to correct it where it is falſe: and when the reſpondent is pinched with a ſtrong objection, and is at a loſs for an anſwer, the moderator aſſiſts him, and ſuggeſts ſome anſwer to the objection of the opponent, in defence of the queſtion, according to his own opinion of ſentiment.

XI. IN public diſputes, where the opponents and reſpondents chuſe their own ſide of the queſtion, the moderator's work is not to favour either diſputant; but he only ſits as preſident to ſee that the laws of diſputation be obſerved, and a *decorum* maintained.

XII. Now the laws of diſputation relate either to the opponent, or to the reſpondent, or to both.

The laws obliging the opponent are theſe.

1. That he muſt directly contradict the propoſition of the reſpondent, and not merely attack any of the arguments whereby the reſpondent has ſupported that propoſition: for it is one thing to confute a ſingle argument of the reſpondent, and another to confute the theſis itſelf.

2. (Which is a-kin to the former) he muſt contradict or oppoſe the very ſenſe and intention of the propoſition as the reſpondent has ſtated it, and not merely oppoſe the words of the theſis in any other ſenſe; for this would be the way to plunge the diſpute into ambiguity and

darkneſs, to talk beſide the queſtion, to wrangle about words, and to attack a propoſition different from what the reſpondent has eſpouſed, which is called *ignoratio elenchi*.

3. He muſt propoſe his argument in a plain, ſhort, and ſyllogiſtic form, according to the rules of logic, without flying to fallacies or ſophiſms; and as far as may be, he ſhould uſe categorical ſyllogiſms.

4. Though the reſpondent may be attacked either upon a point of his own conceſſion, which is called *argumentum ex conceſſis*, or by reducing him to an abſurdity, which is called *reductio ad abſurdum*, yet it is the neateſt, the moſt uſeful, and the beſt ſort of diſputation where the opponent draws his objections from the nature of the queſtion itſelf.

5. Where the reſpondent denies any propoſition, the opponent, if he proceed, muſt directly vindicate and confirm that propoſition, *i. e.* he muſt make that propoſition the concluſion of his next ſyllogiſm.

6. Where the reſpondent limits or diſtinguiſhes any propoſition, the opponent muſt directly prove his own propoſition in that ſenſe, and according to that member of the diſtinction in which the reſpondent denied it.

XIII. The laws that oblige the reſpondent are theſe.

1. To repeat the argument of the opponent in the very ſame words in which it was propoſed, before he attempts to anſwer it.

2. If the ſyllogiſm be falſe in the logical form of it, he muſt diſcover the fault according to the rules of logic.

3. If the argument does not directly and effectually oppoſe his theſis, he muſt ſhew this miſtake, and make it appear that his theſis is ſafe, even though the argument of the opponent be admitted: or at leaſt, that the argument does only aim at it collaterally, or at a diſtance, and not directly overthrow it, or conclude againſt it.

4. Where the matter of the opponent's objection is faulty in any part of it, the reſpondent muſt grant what is true in it, he muſt deny what is falſe, he muſt diſtinguiſh or limit the propoſition which is ambiguous or doubtful; and then granting the ſenſe in which it is true, he muſt deny the ſenſe in which it is falſe.

5.

5. If an hypothetic propoſition be falſe, the reſpondent muſt deny the conſequence: if a disjunctive, he muſt deny the disjunction: if a categoric or relative, he muſt ſimply deny it.

6. It is ſometimes allowed for the reſpondent to uſe an indirect anſwer after he has anſwered directly: and he may alſo ſhew how the opponent's argument may be retorted againſt himſelf.

XIV. The laws that oblige both diſputants are theſe.

1. Sometimes it is neceſſary there ſhould be a mention of certain general principles in which they both agree, relating to the queſtion, that ſo they may not diſpute on thoſe things which either are or ought to have been firſt granted on both ſides.

2. When the ſtate of the controverſy is well known, and plainly determined and agreed, it muſt not be altered by either diſputant in the courſe of the diſputation; and the reſpondent eſpecially ſhould keep a watchful eye on the opponent in this matter.

3. Let neither party invade the province of the other; eſpecially let the reſpondent take heed that he does not turn opponent, except in retorting the argument upon his adverſary after a direct reſponſe; and even this is allowed only as an illuſtration or conformation of his own reſponſe.

4. Let each wait with patience till the other has done ſpeaking. It is a piece of rudeneſs to interrupt another in his ſpeech.

Yet, though the diſputants have not this liberty, the moderator may do it, when either of the diſputants breaks the rules, and he may interpoſe ſo far as to keep them to order.

XV. It muſt be confeſt there are ſome advantages to be attained by academical diſputation. It gives vigour and briſkneſs to the mind thus exerciſed, and relieves the languor of private ſtudy and meditation. It ſharpens the wit and all the inventive powers. It makes the thoughts active, and ſends them on all ſides to find arguments and anſwers both for oppoſition and defence. It gives opportunity of viewing the ſubject of diſcourſe on all ſides, and of learning what inconveniences, difficulties,

culties, and objections attend particular opinions. It furniſhes the ſoul with various occaſions of ſtarting ſuch thoughts as otherwiſe would never have come into the mind. It makes a ſtudent more expert in attacking and refuting an error, as well as in vindicating a truth. It inſtructs the ſcholar in the various methods of warding off the force of objections, and of diſcovering and refelling the ſubtle tricks of ſophiſters. It procures alſo a freedom and readineſs of ſpeech, and raiſes the modeſt and diffident genius to a due degree of courage.

XVI. But there are ſome very grievous inconveniences that may ſometimes overbalance all theſe advantages. For many young ſtudents, by a conſtant habit of diſputing, grow impudent and audacious, proud and diſdainful, talkative and impertinent, and render themſelves intolerable by an obſtinate humour of maintaining whatever they have aſſerted, as well as by a ſpirit of contradiction, oppoſing almoſt every thing that they hear. The diſputation itſelf often awakens the paſſions of ambition, emulation, and anger; it carries away the mind from that calm and ſedate temper which is ſo neceſſary to contemplate truth.

XVII. It is evident alſo, that by frequent exerciſes of this ſort, wherein opinions true and falſe are argued, ſupported, and refuted on both ſides; the mind of man is led by inſenſible degrees to an uncertain and fluctuating temper, and falls into danger of a ſceptical humour, which never comes to an eſtabliſhment in any doctrines. Many perſons by this means become much more ready to oppoſe whatſoever is offered in ſearching out truth; they hardly wait till they have read or heard the ſentiment of any perſon, before their heads are buſily employed to ſeek out arguments againſt it. They grow naturally ſharp in finding out difficulties; and by indulging this humour, they converſe with the dark and doubtful parts of a ſubject ſo long, till they almoſt render themſelves incapable of receiving the full evidence of a propoſition, and acknowledging the light of truth. It has ſome tendency to make a youth a carping critic, rather than a judicious man.

XVIII.

art of disputation useful for the searching out the truth and the defence of it, that it may not be learnt and practised, only as an art of wrangling, which reigned in the schools several hundred years, and divested the growing reason of youth of its best hopes and improvements.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Study, or Meditation.

I.

IT has been proved and established in some of the foregoing chapters, that neither our own observations, nor our reading the labours of the learned, nor the attendance on the best lectures of instruction, nor enjoying the brightest conversation, can ever make a man truly knowing and wise, without the labours of his own reason in surveying, examining, and judging concerning all subjects upon the best evidence he can acquire. A good genius, or sagacity of thought, a happy judgment, a capacious memory, and large opportunities of observation and converse, will do much of themselves towards the cultivation of the mind, where they are well improved: but where, to the advantage of learned lectures, living instructions, and well chosen books, diligence and study are superadded, this man has all human aids concurring to raise him to a superior degree of wisdom and knowledge.

Under the preceding heads of discourse, it has been already declared how our own meditation and reflection should examine, cultivate, and improve all other methods and advantages of enriching the understanding. What remains in this chapter, is to give some further occasional hints how to employ our own thoughts, what sort of subjects we should meditate on, and in what manner we should regulate our studies, and how we may improve our judgment, so as in the most effectual and compendious way to attain such knowledge as may be most useful for every man in his circumstances

of life, and particularly for thoſe of the learned profeſſions.

II. The firſt direction for youth is this, learn betimes to diſtinguiſh between words and things. Get clear and plain ideas of the things you are ſet to ſtudy. Do not content yourſelves with mere words and names, leſt your laboured improvements only amaſs a heap of unintelligible phraſes, and you feed upon huſks inſtead of kernels. This rule is of unknown uſe in every ſcience.

But the greateſt and moſt common danger is in the ſacred ſcience of theology, where ſettled terms and phraſes have been pronounced divine and orthodox, which yet have had no meaning in them. The ſcholaſtic divinity would furniſh us with numerous inſtances of this folly: and yet for many ages, all truth and all hereſy have been determined by ſuch ſenſeleſs teſts, and by words without ideas; ſuch ſhibboleths as theſe have decided the ſecular fates of men; and biſhoprics, or burning mitres or faggots, have been the rewards of different perſons, according as they pronounced theſe conſecrated ſyllables, or not pronounced them. To defend them, was all piety, and pomp, and triumph; to deſpiſe them, to doubt or deny them, was torture and death. A thouſand thank-offerings are due to that providence which has delivered our rage and our nation from theſe abſurd iniquities! O that every ſpecimen and ſhadow of this madneſs were baniſhed from our ſchools and churches in every ſhape!

III. Let not young ſtudents apply themſelves to ſearch out deep, dark, and abſtruſe matters, far above their reach, or ſpend their labour in any peculiar ſubjects, for which they have not the advantages of neceſſary antecedent learning, or books, or obſervations. Let them not be too haſty to know things above their preſent powers, nor plunge their inquiries at once into the depths of knowledge, nor begin to ſtudy any ſcience in the middle of it; this will confound rather than enlighten the underſtanding: ſuch practices may happen to diſcourage and jade the mind by an attempt above its power, it may balk the underſtanding, and create an averſion to future diligence, and perhaps, by deſpair may

may forbid the purſuit of that ſubject for ever afterwards; as a limb overſtrained by lifting a weight above its power may never recover its former agility and vigour; or if it does, the man may be frighted from ever exerting his ſtrength again.

IV. Nor yet let any ſtudent on the other hand fright himſelf at every turn with unſurmountable difficulties, nor imagine that the truth is wrapt up in impenetrable darkneſs. Theſe are formidable ſpectres which the underſtanding raiſes ſometimes to flatter its own lazineſs. Thoſe things which, in a remote and confuſed view, ſeem very obſcure and perplexed, may be approached by gentle and regular ſteps, and may then unfold and explain themſelves at large to the eye. The hardeſt problems in geometry, and the moſt intricate ſchemes or diagrams, may be explicated and underſtood ſtep by ſtep: every great mathematician bears a conſtant witneſs to this obſervation.

V. In learning any new thing, there ſhould be as little as poſſible firſt propoſed to the mind at once, and that being underſtood and fully maſtered, proceed then to the next adjoining part yet unknown. This is a ſlow, but ſafe and ſure way to arrive at knowledge. If the mind apply itſelf at firſt to eaſier ſubjects, and things near a-kin to what is already known, and then advance to the more remote and knotty parts of knowledge by ſlow degrees, it will be able in this manner to cope with great difficulties, and prevail over them with amazing and happy ſucceſs.

Mathon happened to dip into the two laſt chapters of a new book of geometry and menſurations; as ſoon as he ſaw it, and was frighted with the complicated diagrams which he found there, about the fruſtums of cones and pyramids, &c. and ſome deep demonſtrations among conic ſections; he ſhut the book again in deſpair, and imagined none but Sir Iſaac Newton was ever fit to read it. But his tutor happily perſuaded him to begin the firſt pages about lines and angles; and he found ſuch ſurpriſing pleaſure in three weeks time in the victories he daily obtained, that at laſt he became one of the chief geometers of his age.

VI.

VI. Engage not the mind in the intenſe purſuit of too many things at once; eſpecially ſuch as have no relation to one another. This will be ready to diſtract the underſtanding, and hinder it from attaining perfection in any one ſubject of ſtudy. Such a practice gives a ſlight ſmattering of ſeveral ſciences, without any ſolid and ſubſtantial knowledge of them, and without any real and valuable improvement; and though two or three ſorts of ſtudy may be uſually carried on at once, to entertain the mind with variety, that it may not be over-tired with one ſort of thoughts, yet a multitude of ſubjects will too much diſtract the attention, and weaken the application of the mind to any one of them.

Where two or three ſciences are purſued at the ſame time, if one of them be dry, abſtracted, and unpleaſant, as logic, metaphyſics, law, languages, let another be more entertaining and agreeable, to ſecure the mind from wearineſs and averſion to ſtudy. Delight ſhould be intermingled with labour as far as poſſible, to allure us to bear the fatigue of dry ſtudies the better. Poetry, practical mathematics, hiſtory, &c. are generally eſteemed entertaining ſtudies, and may be happily uſed for this purpoſe. Thus while we relieve a dull and heavy hour by ſome alluring employments of the mind, our very diverſions enrich our underſtandings, and our pleaſure is turned into profit.

VII. In the purſuit of every valuable ſubject of knowledge, keep the end always in your eye, and be not diverted from it by every pretty trifle you meet with in the way. Some perſons have ſuch a wandering genius, that they are ready to purſue every incidental theme or occaſional idea, till they have loſt ſight of their original ſubject. Theſe are the men who, when they are engaged in converſation, prolong their ſtory by dwelling on every incident, and ſwell their narrative with long parentheſes, till they have loſt their firſt deſign; like a man who is ſent in queſt of ſome great treaſure, but he ſteps aſide to gather every flower he finds, or ſtands ſtill to dig up every ſhining pebble he meets with in his way, till the treaſure is forgotten and never found.

VIII. Exert your care, ſkill, and diligence about every ſubject, and every queſtion, in a juſt proportion to the importance of it, together with the danger and bad conſequences of ignorance or error therein. Many excellent advantages flow from this one direction.

1. This rule will teach you to be very careful in gaining ſome general and fundamental truths both in philoſophy, in religion, and in human life; becauſe they are of the higheſt moment, and conduct our thoughts with eaſe into a thouſand inferior and particular propoſitions. Such is that great principle in natural philoſophy, the doctrine of gravitation, or mutual tendency of all bodies toward each other, which Sir Iſaac Newton has ſo well eſtabliſhed, and from which he has drawn the ſolution of a multitude of appearances in the heavenly bodies as well as on earth.

Such is that golden principle of morality which our bleſſed Lord has given us, 'Do that to others which you think juſt and reaſonable that others ſhould do to you,' which is almoſt ſufficient in itſelf to ſolve all caſes of conſcience which relate to our neighbour.

Such are thoſe principles in religion, that a rational creature is accountable to his Maker for all his actions; that the ſoul of man is immortal; that there is a future ſtate of happineſs and of miſery depending on our behaviour in the preſent life, on which all our religious practices are built or ſupported.

We ſhould be very curious in examining all propoſitions that pretend to this honour of being general principles: and we ſhould not without juſt evidence admit into this rank mere matters of common fame, or commonly received opinions; no, nor the general determinations of the learned, or the eſtabliſhed articles of any church or nation, &c. for there are many learned preſumptions, many ſynodical and national miſtakes, many eſtabliſhed falſehoods, as well as many vulgar errors, wherein multitudes of men have followed one another for whole ages almoſt blindfold. It is of great importance for every man to be careful that theſe general principles are juſt and true; for one error may lead us into thouſands, which will naturally follow, if once a leading falſehood be admitted.

2. This rule will direct us to be more careful about practical points than mere ſpeculations, ſince they are commonly of much greater uſe and conſequence; therefore the ſpeculations of algebra, the doctrine of infinities, and the quadrature of curves in mathematical learning, together with all the train of theorems in natural philoſophy, ſhould by no means intrench upon our ſtudies of morality and virtue. Even in the ſcience of divinity itſelf, the ſublimeſt ſpeculations of it are not of that worth and value, as the rules of duty towards God and towards men.

3. In matters of practice we ſhould be moſt careful to fix our end right, and wiſely determine the ſcope at which we aim; becauſe that is to direct us in the choice and uſe of all the means to attain it. If our end be wrong, all our labour in the means will be vain, or perhaps ſo much the more pernicious, as they are better ſuited to attain that miſtaken end. If mere ſenſible pleaſure, or human grandeur or wealth, be our chief end, we ſhall chooſe means contrary to piety and virtue, and proceed apace toward real miſery.

4. This rule will engage our beſt powers and deepeſt attention in the affairs of religion, and things that relate to a future world; for thoſe propoſitions which extend only to the intereſt of the preſent life, are but of ſmall importance when compared with thoſe that have influence upon our everlaſting concernments.

5. And even in the affairs of religion, if we walk by the conduct of this rule, we ſhall be much more laborious in our inquiries into the neceſſary and fundamental articles of faith and practice than the leſſer appendices of Chriſtianity. The great doctrines of repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with love to men, and univerſal holineſs, will employ our beſt and brighteſt hours and meditations; while the mint, anniſe, and cummin, the geſtures, and veſtures, and fringes of religion, will be regarded no further than they have a plain and evident connexion with faith and love, with holineſs and peace.

6. This rule will make us ſolicitous not only to avoid ſuch errors, whoſe influence will ſpread wide into the whole ſcheme of our own knowledge and practice, but

but ſuch miſtakes alſo whoſe influence would yet be more extenſive and injurious to others, as well as to ourſelves; perhaps to many perſons or many families, to a whole church, a town, a country, or a kingdom. Upon this account, perſons who are called to inſtruct others, who are raiſed to any eminence either in church or ſtate, ought to be careful in ſettling their principles in matters relating to the civil, the moral, or the religious life, leſt a miſtake of theirs ſhould diffuſe wide miſchief, ſhould draw along with it moſt pernicious conſequences, and perhaps extend to following generations.

Theſe are ſome of the advantages which ariſe from the eight rule, viz. Purſue every inquiry and ſtudy in proportion to its real value and importance.

IX. Have a care leſt ſome beloved notion, or ſome darling ſcience, ſo far prevail over your mind, as to give a ſovereign tincture to all your other ſtudies, and diſcolour all your ideas; like a perſon in the jaundice, who ſpreads a yellow ſcene with his eyes over all the objects which he meets. I have known a man of peculiar ſkill in muſic, and much devoted to that ſcience, who found out a great reſemblance of the Athanaſian doctrine of the Trinity in every ſingle note, and he thought it carried ſomething of argument in it to prove that doctrine. I have read of another, who accommodated the ſeven days of the firſt week of creation to ſeven notes of muſic, and thus the whole creation became harmonious.

Under this influence, derived from mathematical ſtudies, ſome have been tempted to caſt all their logical, their metphyſical, and their theological and moral learning into the method of mathematicians, and bring every thing relating to thoſe abſtracted, or thoſe practical ſciences, under theorms, problems, poſtulates, ſcholiums, corollaries, &c. whereas the matter ought always to direct the method; for all ſubjects or matters of thought cannot be moulded or ſubdued to one form. Neither the rules for the conduct of the underſtanding, nor the doctrines nor duties of religion and virtue, can be exhibited naturally in figures and diagrams. Things are to be conſidered as they are in themſelves; their

natures are inflexible, and their natural relations unalterable; and therefore, in order to conceive them aright, we must bring our understandings to things, and not pretend to bend and strain things to comport with our fancies and forms.

X. SUFFER not any beloved study to prejudice your mind so far in favour of it as to despise all other learning. This is a fault of some little souls who have got a smattering of astronomy, chemistry, metaphysics, history, &c. and for want of a due acquaintance with other sciences, make a scoff at them all in comparison of their favourite science. Their understandings are hereby cooped up in narrow bounds, so that they never look abroad into other provinces of the intellectual world, which are more beautiful perhaps, and more fruitful than their own: if they would search a little into other sciences, they might not only find treasures of new knowledge, but might be furnished also with rich hints of thought, and glorious assistances to cultivate that very province to which they have confined themselves.

Here I would always give some grains of allowance to the sacred science of theology, which is incomparably superior to all the rest, as it teaches us the knowledge of God, and the way to his eternal favour. This is that noble study which is every man's duty, and every one who can be called a rational creature is capable of it. This is that science which would truly enlarge the minds of men, were it studied with that freedom, that unbiassed love of truth, and that sacred charity which it teaches; and if it were not made, contrary to its own nature, the occasion of strife, faction, malignity, a narrow spirit, and unreasonable impositions on the mind and practice. Let this therefore stand always chief.

XI. LET every particular study have due and proper time assigned it, and let not a favourite science prevail with you to lay out such hours upon it, as ought to be employed upon the more necessary and more important affairs or studies of your profession. When you have, according to the best of your discretion, and according to the circumstances of your life, fixed proper hours for particular

particular ſtudies, endeavour to keep to thoſe rules; not indeed with a ſuperſtitious preciſeneſs, but with ſome good degrees of a regular conſtancy. Order and method in a courſe of ſtudy ſaves much time, and makes large improvements: ſuch a fixation of certain hours will have a happy influence to ſecure you from trifling and waſting away your minutes in impertinence.

XII. Do not apply yourſelf to any one ſtudy at one time longer than the mind is capable of giving a cloſe attention to it without wearineſs or wandering. Do not over-fatigue the ſpirits at any time, leſt the mind be ſeized with a laſſitude, and thereby be tempted to nauſeate and grow tired of a particular ſubject before you have finiſhed it.

XIII. In the beginning of your application to any new ſubject, be not too uneaſy under preſent difficulties that occur, nor too importunate and impatient for anſwers and ſolutions to any queſtions that ariſe. Perhaps a little more ſtudy, a little further acquaintance with the ſubject, a little time and experience, will ſolve thoſe difficulties, untie the knot, and make your doubts vaniſh: eſpecially if you are under the inſtruction of a tutor, he can inform you that your inquiries are perhaps too early, and that you have not yet learnt thoſe principles upon which the ſolution of ſuch a difficulty depends.

XIV. Do not expect to arrive at certainty in every ſubject which you purſue. There are a hundred things wherein we mortals in this dark and imperfect ſtate muſt be content with probability, where our beſt light and reaſonings will reach no further. We muſt balance arguments as juſtly as we can, and where we cannot find weight enough on either ſide to determine the ſcale with ſovereign force and aſſurance, we muſt content ourſelves perhaps with a ſmall preponderation. This will give us a probable opinion, and thoſe probabilities are ſufficient for the daily determination of a thouſand actions in human life, and many times even in matters of religion.

It is admirably well expreſſed by a late writer, 'When there is great ſtrength of argument ſet before us, if we will refuſe to do what appears moſt fit for us, until every little objection is removed, we ſhall never take one wiſe reſolution as long as we live.'

Suppoſe I had been honeſtly and long ſearching what religion I ſhould chooſe, and yet I could not find that the arguments in defence of Chriſtianity aroſe to complete certainty, but went only ſo far as to give me a probable evidence of the truth of it; though many difficulties ſtill remained, yet I ſhould think myſelf obliged to receive and practiſe that religion; for the God of nature and reaſon has bound us to aſſent, and act according to the beſt evidence we have, even though it be not abſolute and complete; and as he is our ſupreme Judge, his abounding goodneſs and equity will approve and acquit the man whoſe conſcience honeſtly and willingly ſeeks the beſt light, and obeys it as far as he can diſcover it.

But in matters of great importance in religion, let him join all due diligence with earneſt and humble prayer for divine aid in his inquiries; ſuch prayer and ſuch diligence as eternal concerns require, and ſuch as he may plead with courage before the Judge of all.

XV. Endeavour to apply every ſpeculative ſtudy, as far as poſſible, to ſome practical uſe, that both yourſelf and others may be the better for it. Inquiries even in natural philoſophy ſhould not be mere amuſements, and much leſs in the affairs of religion. Reſearches into the ſprings of natural bodies and their motions ſhould lead men to invent happy methods for the eaſe and convenience of human life; or at leaſt they ſhould be improved to awaken us to admire the wondrous wiſdom and contrivance of God our Creator in all the works of nature.

If we purſue mathematical ſpeculations, they will inure us to attend cloſely to any ſubject, to ſeek and gain clear ideas, to diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood, to judge juſtly, and to argue ſtrongly; and theſe ſtudies do more directly furniſh us with all the various rules of thoſe uſeful arts of life, viz. meaſuring, building, ſailing, &c.

Even our inquiries and diſputations about vacuum or ſpace, and atoms, about incommenſurable quantities, and the infinite diviſibility of matter, and eternal duration, which ſeem to be purely ſpeculative, will ſhew us ſome good practical leſſons, will lead us to ſee the weakneſs

weakneſs of our nature, and ſhould teach us humility in arguing upon divine ſubjects and matters of ſacred revelation. This ſhould guard us againſt rejecting any doctrine which is expreſsly and evidently revealed, though we cannot fully underſtand it. It is good ſometimes to loſe and bewilder ourſelves in ſuch ſtudies for this very reaſon, and to attain this practical advantage, this improvement in true modeſty of ſpirit.

XVI. THOUGH we ſhould always be ready to change our ſentiments of things upon juſt conviction of their falſehood, yet there is not the ſame neceſſity of changing our accuſtomed methods of reading or ſtudy and practice, even though we have not been led at firſt into the happieſt method. Our thoughts may be true, though we may have hit upon an improper order of thinking. Truth does not always depend upon the moſt convenient method. There may be a certain form and order in which we have long accuſtomed ourſelves to range our ideas and notions, which may be beſt for us now, though it was not originally beſt in itſelf. The inconveniences of changing may be much greater than the conveniences we could obtain by a new method.

As for inſtance; if a man in his younger days has ranged all his ſentiments in theology in the method of Ames's Medulla Theologiæ, or Biſhop Uſher's Body of Divinity, it may be much more natural and eaſy for him to continue to diſpoſe all his further acquirements in the ſame order, though perhaps neither of theſe treatiſes are in themſelves written in the moſt perfect method. So when we have long fixed our caſes of ſhelves in a library, and ranged our books in any particular order, viz. according to their languages, or according to their ſubjects, or according to the alphabetical names of the authors, &c. we are perfectly well acquainted with the order in which they now ſtand, and we can find any particular book which we ſeek, or add a new book which we have purchaſed, with much greater eaſe than we do in finer caſes of ſhelves where the books were ranged in any different manner whatſoever; any different poſition of the volumes would be new, and ſtrange, and troubleſome to us, and would not countervail the inconveniences of a change.

So

So if a man of forty years old has been taught to hold his pen awkwardly in his youth, and yet writes ſufficiently well for all the purpoſes of his ſtation, it is not worth while to teach him now the moſt accurate methods of handling that inſtrument; for this would create him more trouble without equal advantage, and perhaps he might never attain to write better after he has placed all his fingers perfectly right with this new accuracy.

CHAP. XV.

Of fixing the Attention.

A STUDENT ſhould labour by all proper methods to acquire a ſteady fixation of thought. Attention is a very neceſſary thing in order to improve our minds. The evidence of truth does not always appear immediately, nor ſtrike the ſoul at firſt ſight. It is by long attention and inſpection that we arrive at evidence, and it is for want of it we judge falſely of many things. We make haſte to determine upon a ſlight and a ſudden view, we confirm our gueſſes which ariſe from a glance, we paſs a judgment while we have but a confuſed or obſcure perception, and thus plunge ourſelves into miſtakes. This is like a man, who walking in a miſt, or being at a great diſtance from any viſible object (ſuppoſe a tree, a man, a horſe, or a church), judges much amiſs of the figure, and ſituation, and colours of it, and ſometimes takes one for the other; whereas if he would but with-hold his judgment till he come nearer to it, or ſtay till clearer light comes, and then would fix his eyes longer upon it, he would ſecure himſelf from thoſe miſtakes.

Now, in order to gain a greater facility of attention, we may obſerve theſe rules.

I. GET a good liking to the ſtudy or knowledge you would purſue. We may obſerve that there is not much difficulty in confining the mind to contemplate what we have a great deſire to know; and eſpecially if they are matters of ſenſe, or ideas which paint themſelves upon the

the fancy. It is but acquiring an hearty good-will and reſolution to ſearch out and ſurvey the various properties and parts of ſuch objects, and our attention will be engaged if there be any delight or diverſion in the ſtudy or contemplation of them. Therefore mathematical ſtudies have a ſtrange influence towards fixing the attention of the mind, and giving a ſteadineſs to a wandering diſpoſition, becauſe they deal much in lines, figures, and numbers, which affect and pleaſe the ſenſe and imagination. Hiſtories have a ſtrong tendency the ſame way, for they engage the ſoul by a variety of ſenſible occurrences; when it hath begun, it knows not how to leave off; it longs to know the final event, through a natural curioſity that belongs to mankind. Voyages and travels, and accounts of ſtrange countries and ſtrange appearances, will aſſiſt in this work. This ſort of ſtudy detains the mind by the perpetual occurrence and expectation of ſomething new, and that which may gratefully ſtrike the imagination.

II. Sometimes we may make uſe of ſenſible things and corporeal images for the illuſtration of thoſe notions which are more abſtracted and intellectual. Therefore diagrams greatly aſſiſt the mind in aſtronomy and philoſophy; and the emblems of virtues and vices may happily teach children, and pleaſingly impreſs thoſe uſeful moral ideas on young minds, which perhaps might be conveyed to them with much more difficulty by mere moral and abſtracted diſcourſes.

I confeſs in this practice of repreſenting moral ſubjects by pictures, we ſhould be cautious leſt we ſo far immerſe the mind in corporeal images, as to render it unfit to take in an abſtracted and intellectual idea, or cauſe it to form wrong conceptions of immaterial things. This practice therefore is rather to be uſed at firſt in order to get a fixed habit of attention, and in ſome caſes only; but it can never be our conſtant way and method of purſuing all moral, abſtracted, and ſpiritual themes.

III. Apply yourſelf to thoſe ſtudies, and read thoſe authors who draw out their ſubjects into a perpetual chain of connected reaſonings, wherein the following parts of the diſcourſe are naturally and eaſily derived from

from thoſe which go before. Several of the mathematical ſciences, if not all, are happily uſeful for this purpoſe. This will render the labour of ſtudy delightful to a rational mind, and will fix the powers of the underſtanding with ſtrong attention to their proper operations by the very pleaſure of it. *Labor ipſe voluptas*, is a happy propoſition whereſoever it can be applied.

IV. Do not chooſe your conſtant place of ſtudy by the finery of the proſpects, or the moſt various and entertaining ſcenes of ſenſible things. Too much light, or a variety of objects which ſtrike the eye or the ear, eſpecially while they are ever in motion or often changing, have a natural and powerful tendency to ſteal away the mind too often from its ſteady purſuit of any ſubject which we contemplate; and thereby the ſoul gets a habit of ſilly curioſity and impertinence, of trifling and wandering. Vagerio thought himſelf furniſhed with the beſt cloſet for his ſtudy among the beauties, gaities, and diverſions of Kenſington or Hampton-Court; but after ſeven years profeſſing to purſue learning, he was a mere novice ſtill.

V. Be not in too much haſte to come to the determination of a difficult or important point. Think it worth your waiting to find out truth. Do not give your aſſent up to either ſide of a queſtion too ſoon, merely on this account, that the ſtudy of it is long and difficult. Rather be contented with ignorance for a ſeaſon, and continue in ſuſpenſe till your attention, and meditation, and due labour, have found out ſufficient evidence on one ſide. Some are ſo fond to know a great deal at once, and love to talk of things with freedom and boldneſs before they thoroughly underſtand them, that they ſcarcely ever allow themſelves attention enough to ſearch the matter through and through.

VI. Have a care of indulging the more ſenſual paſſions and appetites of animal nature; they are great enemies to attention. Let not the mind of a ſtudent be under the influence of any warm affection to things of ſenſe, when he comes to engage in the ſearch of truth, or the improvement of his underſtanding. A perſon under the power of love, or fear, or anger, great pain, or deep

deep ſorrow, hath ſo little government of his ſoul, that he cannot keep it attentive to the proper ſubject of his meditation. The paſſions call away the thoughts with inceſſant opportunity towards the object that excited them; and if we indulge the frequent riſe and roving of paſſions, we ſhall thereby procure an unſteady and inattentive habit of mind.

Yet this one exception muſt be admitted, viz. If we can be ſo happy as to engage any paſſion of the ſoul on the ſide of the particular ſtudy which we are purſuing, it may have a great influence to fix the attention more ſtrongly to it.

VII. It is therefore very uſeful to fix and engage the mind in the purſuit of any ſtudy, by a conſideration of the divine pleaſures of truth and knowledge, by a ſenſe of our duty to God, by a delight in the exerciſe of our intellectual faculties, by the hope of future ſervice to our fellow-creatures, and glorious advantage to ourſelves, both in this world and that which is to come. Theſe thoughts, though they may move our affections, yet they do it with a proper influence: theſe will rather aſſiſt and promote our attention, than diſturb or divert it from the ſubject of our preſent and proper meditations. A ſoul inſpired with the fondeſt love of truth, and the warmeſt aſpirations after ſincere felicity and celeſtial beatitude, will keep all its powers attentive to the inceſſant purſuit of them: paſſion is then refined, and conſecrated to its divineſt purpoſes.

CHAP. XVI.

Of enlarging the Capacity of the Mind.

THERE are three things which in an eſpecial manner go to make up that amplitude or capacity of mind, which is one of the nobleſt characters belonging to the underſtanding: (1.) When the mind is ready to take in great and ſublime ideas without pain or difficulty (2.) When the mind is free to receive new and ſtrange ideas, upon juſt evidence, without great ſurpriſe

priſe or averſion. (3.) When the mind is able to conceive or ſurvey many ideas at once without confuſion, and to form a true judgment derived from that extenſive ſurvey. The perſon who wants either of theſe characters, may in that reſpect be ſaid to have a narrow genius. Let us diffuſe our meditations a little upon this ſubject.

I. That is an ample and capacious mind which is ready to take in vaſt and ſublime ideas without pain or difficulty. Perſons who have never been uſed to converſe with any thing but the common, little, and obvious affairs of life, have acquired a narrow or contracted habit of ſoul, that they are not able to ſtretch their intellects wide enough to admit large and noble thoughts; they are ready to make their domeſtic, daily, and familiar images of things, the meaſure of all that is, and all that can be.

Talk to them of the vaſt dimenſions of the planetary worlds; tell them that the ſtar called Jupiter is a ſolid globe, two hundred and twenty times bigger than our earth; that the ſun is a vaſt globe of fire above a thouſand times bigger than Jupiter; that is two hundred and twenty thouſand times bigger than the earth; that the diſtance from the earth to the ſun is eighty-one millions of miles; and that a cannon-bullet ſhot from the earth would not arrive at the neareſt of the fixed ſtars in ſome hundreds of years; they cannot bear the belief of it, but hear all theſe glorious labours of aſtronomy as a mere idle romance.

Inform them of the amazing ſwiftneſs of the motion of ſome of the ſmalleſt or the biggeſt bodies in nature; aſſure them, according to the beſt philoſophy, that the planet Venus (*i. e.* our morning or evening ſtar, which is near as big as our earth), though it ſeems to move from its place but a few yards in a month, does really fly ſeventy thouſand miles in an hour; tell them that the rays of light ſhoot from the ſun to our earth at the rate of one hundred and eighty thouſand miles in the ſecond of a minute; they ſtand aghaſt at ſuch ſort of talk, and believe it no more than the tales of giants fifty yards high, and the rabbinical fables of leviathan, who every day ſwallows a fiſh of three miles

long, and is thus preparing himself to be the food and entertainment of the bleſſed at the feaſt of Paradiſe.

Theſe overlarged ſouls are in the ſame manner diſguſted with the wonders which the microſcope has diſcovered concerning the ſhape, the limbs, and motions of ten thouſand little animals, whoſe united bulk would not equal a pepper-corn: they are ready to give the lie to all the improvements of our ſenſes by the invention of a variety of glaſſes, and will ſcarcely believe any thing beyond the teſtimony of their naked eye without the aſſiſtance of art.

Now if we would attempt in a learned manner to relieve the minds that labour under this defect,

(1.) It is uſeful to begin with ſome firſt principles of geometry, and lead them onward by degrees to the doctrine of quantities which are incommenſurable, or which will admit of no common meaſure, though it be never ſo ſmall. By this means they will ſee the neceſſity of admitting the infinite diviſibility of quantity or matter.

The ſame doctrine may alſo be proved to their underſtandings, and almoſt to their ſenſes, by ſome eaſier arguments in a more obvious manner. As the very opening and cloſing of a pair of compaſſes will evidently prove, that if the ſmalleſt ſuppoſed part of matter or quantity be put between the points, there will be ſtill leſs and leſs diſtances or quantities all the way between the legs, till you come to the head or joint; wherefore there is no ſuch thing poſſible as the ſmalleſt quantity. But a little acquaintance with true philoſophy and mathematical learning would ſoon teach them, that there are no limits either as to the extenſion of ſpace, or to the diviſion of body, and would lead them to believe there are bodies amazingly great or ſmall beyond their preſent imagination.

(2.) It is proper alſo to acquaint them with the circumference of our earth, which may be proved by very eaſy principles of geometry, geography, and aſtronomy, to be about twenty-four thouſand miles round, as it has been actually found to have this dimenſion by mariners who have ſailed round it. Then let them be taught, that in every twenty-four hours either the ſun

and ſtars muſt all move round this earth, or the earth muſt turn round upon its own axis. If the earth itſelf revolve thus, then each houſe or mountain near the equator muſt move at the rate of a thouſand miles in an hour: but if (as they generally ſuppoſe) the ſun or ſtars move round the earth, then (the circumference of their ſeveral orbits or ſpheres being vaſtly greater than this earth) they muſt have a motion prodigiouſly ſwifter than a thouſand miles an hour. Such a thought as this will by degrees enlarge their minds, and they will be taught, even upon their own principle of the diurnal revolutions of the heavens, to take in ſome of the vaſt dimenſions of the heavenly bodies, their ſpaces and motions.

(3.) To this ſhould be added the uſe of teleſcopes, to help them to ſee the diſtant wonders in the ſkies; and microſcopes, which diſcover the minuteſt parts of little animals, and reveal ſome of the finer and moſt curious works of nature. They ſhould be acquainted alſo with ſome other noble inventions of modern philoſophy, which have a great influence to enlarge the human underſtanding, of which I ſhall take occaſion to ſpeak more under the next head.

(4.) For the ſame purpoſe, they may be invited to read thoſe parts of Milton's admirable poem, entitled Paradiſe Loſt, where he deſcribes the armies and powers of angels, the wars and the ſenate of devils, the creation of this earth, together with the deſcriptions of heaven, hell, and paradiſe.

It muſt be granted that poeſy often deals in theſe vaſt and ſublime ideas. And even if the ſubject or matter of the poem doth not require ſuch amazing and extenſive thoughts, yet tropes and figures, which are ſome of the main powers and beauties of poeſy, do ſo gloriouſly exalt the matter, as to give a ſublime imagination its proper reliſh and delight.

So when a bear is chaſed in hunting,

His noſtrils flames expire,
And his red eye balls roll with living fire. Dryden.

When

When Ulyſſes with-holds and ſuppreſſes his reſentment,

His wrath compreſt
Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breaſt. Pope.

But eſpecially where the ſubject is grand, the poet fails not to repreſent it in all its grandeur.

So when the ſupremacy of a God is deſcribed,

He ſees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perith, or a ſparrow fall:
Atoms or ſyſtems, into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burſt, and now a world. Pope.

Theſe ſorts of writing have a natural tendency to enlarge the capacity of the mind, and make ſublime ideas familiar to it. And inſtead of running always to the ancient Heathen poeſy with this deſign, we may with equal, if not ſuperior advantage, apply ourſelves to converſe with ſome of the beſt of our modern poets, as well as with the writings of the prophets, and the poetical parts of the Bible, viz. the book of Job and the Pſalms, in which ſacred authors we ſhall find ſometimes more ſublime ideas, more glorious deſcriptions, more elevated language, than the fondeſt critics have ever found in any of the Heathen verſifiers either of Greece or Rome; for the Eaſtern writers uſe and allow much ſtronger figures and tropes than the Weſtern.

Now there are many, and great, and ſacred advantages to be derived from this ſort of enlargement of the mind.

It will lead us into more exalted apprehenſions of the great God our Creator than ever we had before. It will entertain our thoughts with holy wonder and amazement, while we contemplate that Being who created theſe various works of ſurpriſing greatneſs, and ſurpriſing ſmallneſs; who has diſplayed moſt inconceivable wiſdom in the contrivance of all the parts, powers, and motions of theſe little animals, inviſible to the naked eye; who has manifeſted a moſt divine extent of knowledge, power, and greatneſs, in forming, moving, and managing the moſt extenſive bulk of the

heavenly bodies, and in surveying and comprehending all those unmeasurable spaces in which they move. Fancy, with all her images, is fatigued and overwhelmed in following the planetary worlds through such immense stages, such astonishing journeys as these are, and resigns its place to the pure intellect, which learns by degrees to take in such ideas as these, and to adore its Creator with new and sublime devotion.

And not only are we taught to form juster ideas of the great God by these methods, but this enlargement of the mind carries us on to nobler conceptions of his intelligent creatures. The mind that deals only in vulgar and common ideas is ready to imagine the nature and powers of man to come something too near to God his Maker, because we do not see or sensibly converse with any beings superior to ourselves. But when the soul has obtained a greater amplitude of thought, it will not then immediately pronounce every thing to be God which is above man. It then learns to suppose there may be as many various ranks of beings in the invisible world, in a constant gradation superior to us, as we ourselves are superior to all the ranks of being beneath us in this visible world; even though we descend downward far below the ant and the worm, the snail and the oyster, to the least and to the dullest animated atoms which are discovered to us by microscopes.

By this means we shall be able to suppose what prodigious power angels, whether good or bad, must be furnished with, and prodigious knowledge, in order to oversee the realms of Persia and Græcia of old, or if any such superintend the affairs of Great Britain, France, Ireland, Germany, &c. in our days: What power and speed is necessary to destroy one hundred eighty-five thousand armed men in one night in the Assyrian camp of Sennacherib, and all the first born in the land of Egypt in another, both which are attributed to an angel.

By these steps we shall ascend to form more just ideas of the knowledge and grandeur, the power and glory, of the Man Jesus Christ, who is intimately united to God, and is one with him. Doubtless he is furnished with superior powers to all the angels in heaven, because

because he is employed in superior work, and appointed to be the Sovereign Lord of all the visible and invisible worlds. It is his human nature, in which the Godhead dwells bodily, that is advanced to these honours, and to this empire; and perhaps there is little or nothing in the government of the kingdoms of nature, and grace, but what is transacted by the Man Jesus, inhabited by the divine power and wisdom, and employed as a medium or conscious instrument of this extensive gubernation.

II. I PROCEED now to consider the next thing wherein the capacity or amplitude of the mind consists, and that is, when the mind is free to receive new and strange ideas and propositions upon just evidence without any great surprise or aversion. Those who confine themselves within the circle of their own hereditary ideas and opinions, and who never give themselves leave so much as to examine or believe any thing beside the dictates of their own family, or sect, or party, are justly charged with a narrowness of soul. Let us survey some instances of this imperfection, and then direct to the cure of it.

(1.) Persons who have been bred up all their days within the smoke of their father's chimney, or within the limits of their native town or village, are surprised at every new sight that appears, when they travel a few miles from home. The plowman stands amazed at the shops, the trade, the crowds of people, the magnificent buildings, the pomp, and riches, and equipage of the court and city, and would hardly believe what was told him before he saw it. On the other hand, the cockney, travelling into the country, is surprised at many actions of the quadruped and winged animals in the field, and at many common practices of rural affairs.

If either of these happen to hear an account of the familiar and daily customs of foreign countries, they pronounce them at once indecent and ridiculous; so narrow are their understandings, and their thoughts so confined, that they know not how to believe any thing wise or proper, besides what they have been taught to practise.

This narrowneſs of mind ſhould be cured by hearing and reading the accounts of different parts of the world, and the hiſtories of paſt ages, and of nations and countries diſtant from our own, eſpecially the more polite parts of mankind. Nothing tends in this reſpect ſo much to enlarge the mind as travelling, i. e. making a viſit to other towns, cities, or countries, beſides thoſe in which we were born and educated: and where our condition of life does not grant us this privilege, we muſt endeavour to ſupply the want of it by books.

(2.) It is the ſame narrowneſs of mind that awakens the ſurpriſe and averſion of ſome perſons, when they hear of doctrines and ſchemes in human affairs, or in religion, quite different from what they have embraced. Perhaps they have been trained up from their infancy in one ſet of notions, and their thoughts have been confined to one ſingle tract both in the civil or religious life, without ever hearing or knowing what other opinions are current among mankind: or at leaſt they have ſeen all other notions beſides their own repreſented in a falſe and malignant light, whereupon they judge and condemn at once every ſentiment but what their own party receives, and they think it a piece of juſtice and truth to lay heavy cenſures upon the practice of every different ſect in Chriſtianity or politics. They have ſo rooted themſelves in the opinions of their party, that they cannot hear an objection with patience, nor can they bear a vindication, or ſo much as an apology, for any ſet of principles beſides their own: all the reſt is nonſenſe or hereſy, folly or blaſphemy.

This defect alſo is to be relieved by free converſation with perſons of different ſentiments; this will teach us to bear with patience a defence of opinions contrary to our own. If we are ſcholars, we ſhould alſo read the objections againſt our own tenets, and view the principles of other parties, as they are repreſented in their own authors, and not merely in the citations of thoſe who would confute them. We ſhould take an honeſt unbiaſſed ſurvey of the force of reaſoning on all ſides, and bring all to the teſt of unprejudiced reaſon and divine revelation. Note, this is not to be done in a raſh and ſelf-ſufficient manner, but with humble dependence

on

on divine wiſdom and grace, while we walk among ſnares and dangers.

By ſuch a free converſe with perſons of different ſects, (eſpecially thoſe who differ only in particular forms of Chriſtianity, but agree in the great and neceſſary doctrines of it), we ſhall find that there are perſons of good ſenſe and virtue, perſons of piety and worth, perſons of much candour and goodneſs, who belong to different parties, and have imbibed ſentiments oppoſite to each other. This will ſoften the roughneſs of an unpoliſhed ſoul, and enlarge the avenues of our charity toward others, and incline us to receive them into all the degrees of unity and affection which the word of God requires.

(3) I might borrow further illuſtrations, both of this freedom and this averſion to receive new truths, from modern aſtronomy and natural philoſophy. How much is the vulgar part of the world ſurpriſed at the talk of the diurnal and annual revolutions of the earth! They have ever been taught by their ſenſes and their neighbours to imagine the earth ſtands fixed in the centre of the univerſe, and that the ſun, with all the planets and the fixed ſtars, are whirled round this little globe once in twenty-four hours; not conſidering that ſuch a diurnal motion, by reaſon of the diſtance of ſome of thoſe heavenly bodies, muſt be almoſt infinitely ſwifter and more inconceivable than any which the modern aſtronomers attribute to them. Tell theſe perſons that the ſun is fixed in the centre, that the earth with all the planets roll round the ſun in their ſeveral periods, and that the moon rolls round the earth in a leſſer circle, while together with the earth ſhe is carried round the ſun; they cannot admit a ſyllable of this new and ſtrange doctrine, and they pronounce it utterly contrary to all ſenſe and reaſon.

Acquaint them that there are four moons alſo perpetually rolling round the planet Jupiter, and carried along with him in his periodical circuit round the ſun, which little moons were never known till the year 1610, when Galileo diſcovered them by his teleſcope: inform them that Saturn has five moons of the ſame kind attending him; and that the body of that the planet is encompaſſed

compaſſed with a broad flat circular ring, diſtant from the planet twenty-one thouſand miles, and twenty-one thouſand miles broad, they look upon theſe things as tales and fancies, and will tell you that the glaſſes do but delude your eyes with vain images; and even when they themſelves conſult their own eye-ſight in the uſe of theſe tubes, the narrowneſs of their mind is ſuch, that they will ſcarcely believe their ſenſes when they dictate ideas ſo new and ſtrange.

And if you proceed further, and attempt to lead them into a belief that all theſe planetary worlds are habitable, and it is probable they are replenished with intellectual beings dwelling in bodies, they will deride the folly of him that informs them; for they reſolve to believe there are no habitable worlds but this earth, and no ſpirits dwelling in bodies beſides mankind; and it is well if they do not fix the brand of hereſy on the man who is leading them out of their own long impriſonment, and looſing the fetters of their ſouls.

There are many other things relating to mechanical experiments, and to the properties of the air, water, fire, iron, the loadſtone, and other minerals and metals, as well as the doctrine of the ſenſible qualities, viz. colours, ſounds, taſtes, &c. which this rank of men cannot believe for want of a greater amplitude of mind.

The beſt way to convince them, is by giving them ſome acquaintance with the various experiments in philoſophy, and proving by ocular demonſtration the multiform and amazing operations of the air-pump, the loadſtone, the chemical furnace, optical glaſſes, and mechanical engines. By this means the underſtanding will ſtretch itſelf by degrees, and when they have found there are ſo many new and ſtrange things that are moſt evidently true, they will not be ſo forward to condemn every new propoſition in any of the other ſciences, or in the affairs of religion or civil life.

III. The capacity of the underſtanding includes yet another qualification in it, and that is an ability to receive many ideas at once without confuſion. The ample mind takes a ſurvey of ſeveral objects with one glance, keeps them all within ſight and preſent to the

ſoul,

ſoul, that they may be compared together in their mutual reſpects; it forms juſt judgments, and it draws proper inferences from this compariſon, even to a great length of argument, and a chain of demonſtrations.

The narrowneſs that belongs to human ſouls in general, is a great imperfection and impediment to wiſdom and happineſs. There are but few perſons who can contemplate or practiſe ſeveral things at once; our faculties are very limited, and while we are intent upon one part or property of a ſubject, we have but a ſlight glimpſe of the reſt, or we loſe it out of ſight. But it is a ſign of a large and capacious mind, if we can with one ſingle view take in a variety of objects; or at leaſt when the mind can apply itſelf to ſeveral objects with ſo ſwift a ſucceſſion, and in ſo few moments, as attains almoſt the ſame ends as if it were all done in the ſame inſtant.

This is a neceſſary qualification in order to great knowledge and good judgment; for there are ſeveral things in human life, in religion, and in the ſciences, which have various circumſtances, appendices, and relations attending them; and without a ſurvey of all thoſe ideas which ſtand in connection with, and relation to each other, we are often in danger of paſſing a falſe judgment on the ſubject propoſed. It is for this reaſon there are ſo numerous controverſies found among the learned and unlearned world, in matters of religion as well as in the affairs of civil government. The notions of ſin and duty to God and our fellow-creatures; of law, juſtice, authority, and powers; of covenant, faith, juſtification, redemption, and grace; of church, biſhop, preſbyter, ordination, &c. contain in them ſuch complicated ideas, that when we are to judge of any thing concerning them, it is hard to take into our view at once all the attendants or conſequents that muſt and will be concerned in the determination of a ſingle queſtion: and yet without a due attention to many, or moſt of theſe, we are in danger of determining that queſtion amiſs.

It is owing to the narrowneſs of our minds that we are expoſed to the ſame peril in the matters of human duty and prudence. In many things which we do, we ought

ought not only to conſider the mere naked action itſelf, but the perſons who act, the perſons toward whom, the time when, the place where, the manner how, the end for which the action is done, together with the effects that muſt, or that may follow, and all other ſurrounding circumſtances: theſe things muſt neceſſarily be taken into our view, in order to determine whether the action, which is indifferent in itſelf, be either lawful or unlawful, good or evil, wiſe or fooliſh, decent or indecent, proper or improper, as it is ſo circumſtantiated.

Let me give a plain inſtance for the illuſtration of this matter. Mario kills a dog, which, conſidered merely in itſelf, ſeems to be an indifferent action: now the dog was Timon's, and not his own; this makes it look unlawful. But Timon bid him do it; this gives it an appearance of lawfulneſs again. It was done at church, and in time of divine ſervice; theſe circumſtances added, caſt on it an air of irreligion. But the dog flew at Mario, and put him in danger of his life; this relieves the ſeeming impiety of the action. Yet Mario might have eſcaped by flying thence; therefore the action appears to be improper. But the dog was known to be mad; this further circumſtance makes it almoſt neceſſary that the dog ſhould be ſlain, leſt he might worry the aſſembly, and do much miſchief. Yet again, Mario killed him with a piſtol, which he happened to have in his pocket ſince yeſterday's journey, now hereby the whole congregation was terrified and diſcompoſed, and divine ſervice was broken off; this carries an appearance of great indecency and impropriety in it: but after all, when we conſider a further circumſtance, that Mario being thus violently aſſaulted by a mad dog, had no way of eſcape, and had no other weapon about him, it ſeems to take away all the colours of impropriety, indecency, or unlawfulneſs, and to allow that the preſervation of one or many lives will juſtify the act as wiſe and good. Now all theſe concurrent appendices of the action ought to be ſurveyed, in order to pronounce with juſtice and truth concerning it.

There

There are a multitude of human actions in private life, in domeſtic affairs, in traffic, in civil government, in courts of juſtice, in ſchools of learning, &c. which have ſo many complicated circumſtances, aſpects, and ſituations, with regard to time and place, perſons and things, that it is impoſſible for any one to paſs a right judgment concerning them, without entering into moſt of theſe circumſtances, and ſurveying them extenſively, and comparing and balancing them all aright.

Whence, by the way, I may take occaſion to ſay, How many thouſands are there who take upon them to paſs their cenſures on the perſonal and the domeſtic actions of others, who pronounce boldly on the affairs of the public, and determine the juſtice or madneſs, the wiſdom or folly of national adminiſtrations, of peace and war, &c. whom neither God nor men ever qualified for ſuch a poſt of judgment? They were not capable of entering into the numerous concurring ſprings of action, nor had they ever taken a ſurvey of the twentieth part of the circumſtances which were neceſſary for ſuch judgments or cenſures.

It is the narrowneſs of our minds, as well as the vices of the will, that oftentimes prevents us from taking a full view of all the complicated and concurring appendices that belong to human actions: thence it comes to paſs that there is ſo little right judgment, ſo little juſtice, prudence, or decency, practiſed among the bulk of mankind; thence ariſe infinite reproaches and cenſures, alike fooliſh and unrighteous. You ſee therefore how needful and happy a thing it is to be poſſeſt of ſome meaſure of this amplitude of ſoul, in order to make us very wiſe, or knowing, or juſt, or prudent, or happy.

I confeſs this ſort of amplitude or capacity of mind is in a great meaſure the gift of nature, for ſome are born with much more capacious ſouls than others.

The genius of ſome perſons is ſo poor and limited, that they can hardly take in the connexion of two or three propoſitions, unleſs it be in matters of ſenſe, and which they have learnt by experience; they are utterly unfit for ſpeculative ſtudies; it is hard for them to diſcern the difference betwixt right and wrong in matters of

of reaſon, on any abſtracted ſubjects; theſe ought never to ſet up for ſcholars, but apply themſelves to thoſe arts and profeſſions of life which are to be learnt at an eaſier rate, by ſlow degrees, and daily experience.

Others have a ſoul a little more capacious, and they can take in the connexion of a few propoſitions pretty well; but if the chain of conſequences be a little prolix, here they ſtick and are confounded. If perſons of this make ever devote themſelves to ſcience, they ſhould be well aſſured of a ſolid and ſtrong conſtitution of body, and well reſolved to bear the fatigue of hard labour and diligence in ſtudy: if the iron be blunt, king Solomon tell us we muſt put more ſtrength.

But, in the third place, there are ſome of ſo bright and happy a genius, and ample a mind, that they can take in a long train of propoſitions, if not at once, yet in a very few moments, and judge well concerning the dependence of them. They can ſurvey a variety of complicated ideas without fatigue or diſturbance; and a number of truths offering themſelves as it were in one view to their underſtanding, doth not perplex or confound them. This makes a great man.

Now though there may be much owing to nature in this caſe, yet experience aſſures us, that even a lower degree of this capacity and extent of thought may be increaſed by diligence and application, by frequent exerciſe, and the obſervation of ſuch rules as theſe.

I. Labour by all means to gain an attentive and patient temper of mind, a power of confining and fixing your thoughts ſo long on any one appointed ſubject, till you have ſurveyed it on every ſide, and in every ſituation, and run through the ſeveral powers, parts, properties, and relations, effects, and conſequences of it. He whoſe thoughts are very fluttering and wandering, and cannot be fixed attentively to a few ideas ſucceſſively, will never be able to ſurvey many and various objects diſtinctly at once, but will certainly be overwhelmed and confounded with the multiplicity of them. The rules for fixing the attention in the former chapter, are proper to be conſulted here.

II. Accuſtom yourſelf to clear and diſtinct ideas in every thing you think of. Be not ſatisfied with obſcure

ſcure and confuſed conceptions of things, eſpecially where clearer may be obtained; for one obſcure or confuſed idea, eſpecially if it be of great importance in the queſtion, intermingled with many clear ones, and placed in its variety of aſpects towards them, will be in danger of ſpreading confuſion over the whole ſcene of ideas, and thus may have an unhappy influence to overwhelm the underſtanding with darkneſs, and pervert the judgment. A little black paint will ſhamefully tincture and ſpoil twenty gay colours.

Conſider yet further, that if you content yourſelf frequently with words inſtead of ideas, or with cloudy and confuſed notions of things, how impenetrable will that darkneſs be, and how vaſt and endleſs that confuſion which muſt ſurround and involve the underſtanding, when many of theſe obſcure and confuſed ideas come to be ſet before the ſoul at once? and how impoſſible will it be to form a clear and juſt judgment about them?

III. Use all diligence to acquire and treaſure up a large ſtore of ideas and notions; take every opportunity to add ſomething to your ſtock, and by frequent recollection fix them in your memory: nothing tends to confirm and enlarge the memory like a frequent review of its poſſeſſions. Then the brain being well furniſhed with various traces, ſignatures, and images, will have a rich treaſure always ready to be propoſed or offered to the ſoul, when it directs its thought towards any particular ſubject. This will gradually give the mind a faculty of ſurveying many objects at once; as a room that is richly adorned and hung round with a great variety of pictures, ſtrikes the eye almoſt at once with all that variety, eſpecially if they have been well ſurveyed one by one at firſt: this makes it habitual and more eaſy to the inhabitants to take in many of thoſe painted ſcenes with a ſingle glance or two.

Here note, that by acquiring a rich treaſure of notions, I do not mean only ſingle ideas, but alſo propoſitions, obſervations, and experiences, with reaſonings and arguments upon the various ſubjects that occur among natural or moral, common or ſacred affairs; that when you are called to judge concerning any queſtion,

you will have ſome principles of truth, ſome uſeful axioms and obſervations always ready at hand to direct and aſſiſt your judgment.

IV. It is neceſſary that we ſhould as far as poſſible entertain and lay up our daily new ideas, in a regular order, and range the acquiſitions of our ſouls under proper heads, whether of divinity, law, phyſics, mathematics, morality, politics, trade, domeſtic life, civility, decency, &c. whether of cauſe, effect, ſubſtance, mode, power, property, body, ſpirit, &c. We ſhould inure our minds to method and order continually: and when we take in any freſh ideas, occurrences, and obſervations, we ſhould diſpoſe of them in their proper places, and ſee how they ſtand and agree with the reſt of our notions on the ſame ſubject: as a ſcholar would diſpoſe of a new book on a proper ſhelf among its kindred authors; or as an officer at the poſt-houſe in London diſpoſes of every letter he takes in, placing it in the box that belongs to the proper road or county.

In any of theſe caſes, if things lay all in a heap, the addition of any new object would increaſe the confuſion; but method gives a ſpeedy and ſhort ſurvey of them with eaſe and pleaſure. Method is of admirable advantage to keep our ideas from a confuſed mixture, and to preſerve them ready for every uſe. The ſcience of ontology, which diſtributes all beings, and all the affections of being, whether abſolute or relative, under proper claſſes, is of good ſervice to keep our intellectual acquiſitions in ſuch order as that the mind may ſurvey them at once.

V. As method is neceſſary for the improvement of the mind, in order to make your treaſure of ideas moſt uſeful; ſo in all your further purſuits of truth, and acquirement of rational knowledge, obſerve a regular progreſſive method. Begin with the moſt ſimple, eaſy, and obvious ideas; then by degrees join two, and three, and more of them together: thus the complicated ideas growing up under your eye and obſervation, will not give the ſame confuſion of thought as they would do if they were all offered to the mind at once, without your obſerving the original and formation of them. An eminent example of this appears in the ſtudy of arithmetic. If a

ſcholar

ſcholar juſt admitted into the ſchool obſerves his maſter performing an operation in the rule of diviſion, his head is at once diſturbed and confounded with the manifold compariſons of the numbers of the diviſor and dividend, and the multiplication of the one and ſubtraction of it from the other: but if he begin regularly at addition and ſo proceed by ſubtraction and multiplication, he will then in a few weeks be able to take in an intelligent ſurvey of all thoſe operations in diviſion, and to practiſe them himſelf with eaſe and pleaſure, each of which at firſt ſeemed all intricacy and confuſion.

An illuſtration of the like nature may be borrowed from geometry and algebra, and other mathematical practices: How eaſily does an expert geometrician with one glance of his eye take in a complicated diagram made up of many lines and circles, angles and arches? How readily does he judge of it, whether the demonſtration deſigned by it be true or falſe? It was by degrees he arrived at this ſtretch of underſtanding; he began with a ſingle line or a point; he joined two lines in an angle; he advanced to triangles and ſquares, polygons and circles; thus the powers of his underſtanding were ſtretched and augmented daily, till by diligence and regular application he acquired this extenſive faculty of mind.

But this advantage does not belong only to mathematical learning. If we apply ourſelves at firſt in any ſcience to clear and ſingle ideas, and never hurry ourſelves on to the following and more complicated parts of knowledge till we thoroughly underſtand the foregoing, we may practiſe the ſame method of enlarging the capacity of the ſoul with ſucceſs in any one of the ſciences, or in the affairs of life and religion.

Beginning with *A*, *B*, *C*, and making ſyllables out of letters, and words out of ſyllables, has been the foundation of all that glorious ſuperſtructure of arts and ſciences, which have enriched the minds and libraries of the learned world in ſeveral ages. Theſe are the firſt ſteps by which the ample and capacious ſouls among mankind have arrived at that prodigious extent of knowledge, which renders them the wonder and glory of the nation where they live. Though Plato and Cicero, Deſcartes and Mr Boyle, Mr Locke and Sir

Iſaac Newton, were doubtleſs favoured by nature with a genius of uncommon amplitude; yet in their early years and firſt attempts of ſcience, this was but limited and narrow in compariſon of what they attained at laſt. But how vaſt and capacious were thoſe powers which they afterwards acquired by patient attention and watchful obſervation, by the purſuit of clear ideas and a regular method of thinking!

VI. Another means of acquiring this amplitude and capacity of mind, is a peruſal of difficult entangled queſtions, and of the ſolution of them in any ſcience. Speculative and eccleſiaſtical divinity will furniſh us with many ſuch caſes and controverſies. There are ſome ſuch difficulties in reconciling ſeveral parts of the Epiſtles of St Paul, relating to the Jewiſh law and the Chriſtian goſpel, a happy ſolution whereof will require ſuch an extenſive view of things, and the reading of theſe happy ſolutions will enlarge this faculty in younger ſtudents. In morals and political ſubjects, Puffendorf's Law of Nature and Nations, and ſeveral determinations therein, will promote the ſame amplitude of mind. An attendance on public trials and arguments in the civil courts of juſtice will be of good advantage for this purpoſe; and after a man has ſtudied the general principles of the law of nature and the laws of England in proper books, the reading the reports of adjudged caſes, collected by men of great ſagacity and judgment, will richly improve the mind toward acquiring this deſirable amplitude and extent of thought, and more eſpecially in perſons of that profeſſion.

CHAP. XVII.

Of improving the Memory.

MEMORY is a diſtinct faculty of the mind of man, very different from perception, judgment, and reaſoning, and its other powers. Then we are ſaid to remember any thing, when the idea of it ariſes in the mind with a conſciouſneſs at the ſame time that we have had this idea before. Our memory is our natural pow-

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er of retaining what we learn, and of recalling it on every occaſion. Therefore we can never be ſaid to remember any thing, whether it be ideas or propoſitions, words or things, notions or arguments, of which we have not had ſome former idea or perception, either by ſenſe or imagination, thought or reflection; but whatſoever we learn from obſervation, books, or converſation, &c. it muſt all be laid up and preſerved in the memory, if we would make it really uſeful.

So neceſſary and ſo excellent a faculty is the memory of man, that all other abilities of the mind borrow from hence their beauty and perfection; for other capacities of the ſoul are almoſt uſeleſs without this. To what purpoſe are all our labours in knowledge and wiſdom, if we want memory to preſerve and uſe what we have acquired? What ſignify all other intellectual or ſpiritual improvements, if they are loſt as ſoon as they are obtained? It is memory alone that enriches the mind, by preſerving what our labour and induſtry daily collect. In a word, there can be neither knowledge, nor arts, nor ſciences, without memory; nor can there be any improvement of mankind in virtue or morals, or the practice of religion, without the aſſiſtance and influence of this power. Without memory the ſoul of man would be but a poor, deſtitute, naked being, with an everlaſting blank ſpread over it, except the fleeting ideas of the preſent moment.

Memory is very uſeful to thoſe who ſpeak, as well as to thoſe who learn. It aſſiſts the teacher and the orator, as well as the ſcholar or the hearer. The beſt ſpeeches and inſtructions are almoſt loſt, if thoſe who hear them immediately forget them. And thoſe who are called to ſpeak in public are much better heard and accepted, when they can deliver their diſcourſe by the help of a lively genius and a ready memory, than when they are forced to read all that they would communicate to their hearers. Reading is certainly a heavier way of the conveyance of our ſentiments: and there are very few mere readers who have the felicity of penetrating the ſoul, and awakening the paſſions of thoſe who hear, by ſuch a grace and power of oratory, as the man who ſeems to talk every word from his very

heart, and pours out the riches of his own knowledge upon the people round about him by the help of a free and copious memory. This gives life and ſpirit to every thing that is ſpoken, and has a natural tendency to make a deeper impreſſion on the minds of men; it awakens the dulleſt ſpirits, cauſes them to receive a diſcourſe with more affection and pleaſure, and adds a ſingular grace and excellency both to the perſon and his oration.

A good judgment and a good memory are very different qualifications. A perſon may have a very ſtrong, capacious, and retentive memory, where the judgment is very poor and weak; as ſometimes it happens in thoſe who are but one degree above an idiot, who have manifeſted an amazing ſtrength and extent of memory, but have hardly been able to join or disjoin two or three ideas in a wiſe and happy manner, to make a ſolid rational propoſition.

There have been inſtances of others who have had but a very tolerable power of memory, yet their judgment has been of a much ſuperior degree, juſt and wiſe, ſolid and excellent.

Yet it muſt be acknowledged, that where a happy memory is found in any perſon, there is one good foundation laid for a wiſe and juſt judgment of things, wherefoever the natural genius has any thing of ſagacity and brightneſs to make a right uſe of it. A good judgment muſt always in ſome meaſure depend upon a ſurvey and compariſon of ſeveral things together in the mind, and determining the truth of ſome doubtful propoſition by that ſurvey and compariſon. When the mind has, as it were, ſet all thoſe various objects preſent before it, which are neceſſary to form a true propoſition or judgment concerning any thing, it then determines that ſuch and ſuch ideas are to be joined or disjoined, to be affirmed or denied; and this in a conſiſtency and correſpondence with all thoſe other ideas or propoſitions which any way relate or belong to the ſame ſubject. Now there can be no ſuch comprehenſive ſurvey of many things without a tolerable degree of memory; it is by reviewing things paſt we learn to judge of the future: and it happens ſometimes that

if

if one needful or important object or idea be abſent, the judgment concerning the thing inquired will thereby become falſe or miſtaken.

You will inquire then, How comes it to paſs that there are ſome perſons who appear in the world of buſineſs, as well as in the world of learning, to have a good judgment, and have acquired the juſt character of prudence and wiſdom, and yet have neither a very bright genius nor ſagacity of thought, nor a very happy memory, ſo that they cannot ſet before their minds at once a large ſcene of ideas in order to paſs a judgment.

Now we may learn from Penſeroſo ſome account of this difficulty. You ſhall ſcarcely ever find this man forward in judging and determining things propoſed to him: but he always takes time, and delays, and ſuſpends, and ponders things naturally, before he paſſes his judgment: then he practiſes a ſlow meditation, ruminates on the ſubject, and thus perhaps in two or three nights and days rouſes and awakens thoſe ſeveral ideas, one after another as he can, which are neceſſary in order to judge aright of the thing propoſed, and makes them paſs before his review in ſucceſſion: this he doth to relieve the want both of a quick ſagacity of thought, and of a ready memory and ſpeedy recollection; and this caution and practice lays the foundation of his juſt judgment and wiſe conduct. He ſurveys well before he judges.

Whence I cannot but take occaſion to infer one good rule of advice to perſons of higher as well as lower genius, and of large as well as narrow memories, viz. That they do not too haſtily pronounce concerning matters of doubt or inquiry, where there is not an urgent neceſſity of preſent action. The bright genius is ready to be ſo forward as often betrays itſelf into great errors in judgment, ſpeech, and conduct, without a continual guard upon itſelf, and uſing the bridle of the tongue. And it is by this delay and precaution, that many a perſon of much lower natural abilities ſhall often excel perſons of the brighteſt genius in wiſdom and prudence.

It is often found that a fine genius has but a feeble memory: for where the genius is bright, and the imagination vivid, the power of memory may be too much neglected, and loſe its improvement. An active fancy readily wanders over a multitude of objects, and is continually entertaining itſelf with new flying images: it runs through a number of new ſcenes or new pages with pleaſure, but without due attention, and ſeldom ſuffers itſelf to dwell long enough upon any one of them to make a deep impreſſion thereof upon the mind, and commit it to laſting remembrance. This is one plain and obvious reaſon why there are ſome perſons of very bright parts and active ſpirits, who have but ſhort and narrow powers of remembrance; for having riches of their own, they are not ſolicitous to borrow.

And as ſuch a quick and various fancy and invention may be ſome hindrance to the attention and memory, ſo a mind of a good retentive ability, and which is ever crowding its memory with things which it learns and reads continually, may prevent, reſtrain, and cramp the invention itſelf. The memory of Lectorides is ever ready upon all occaſions to offer to his mind ſomething out of other mens writings or converſations, and is preſenting him with the thoughts of other perſons perpetually: thus the man who had naturally a good flowing invention, does not ſuffer himſelf to purſue his own thoughts. Some perſons who have been bleſt by nature with ſagacity, and no contemptible genius, have too often forbid the exerciſe of it, by tying themſelves down to the memory of the volumes they have read, and the ſentiments of other men contained in them.

Where the memory has been almoſt conſtantly employing itſelf in ſcraping together new acquirements, and where there has not been a judgment ſufficient to diſtinguiſh what things were fit to be recommended and treaſured up in the memory, and what things were idle, uſeleſs, or needleſs, the mind has been filled with a wretched heap and hotch-potch of words or ideas, and the ſoul may be ſaid to have had large poſſeſſions, but no true riches.

I have

I have read in ſome of Mr Milton's writings a very beautiful ſimile, whereby he repreſents the books of the fathers, as they are called in the Chriſtian church. Whatſoever, ſaith he, Old Time with his huge drag-net has conveyed down to us along the ſtream of ages, whether it be ſhells or ſhell-fiſh, jewels or pebbles, ſticks or ſtraws, ſea-weeds or mud, theſe are the ancients, theſe are the fathers. The caſe is much the ſame with the memorial poſſeſſions of the greateſt part of mankind. A few uſeful things perhaps, mixed and confounded with many trifles and all manner of rubbiſh, fill up their memories and compoſe their intellectual poſſeſſions. It is a great happineſs therefore to diſtinguiſh things aright, and to lay up nothing in the memory but what has ſome juſt value in it, and is worthy to be numbered as a part of our treaſure.

Whatſoever improvements ariſe to the mind of man from the wiſe exerciſe of his own reaſoning powers, theſe may be called his proper manufactures; and whatſoever he borrows from abroad, theſe may be termed his foreign treaſures; both together make a wealthy and happy mind.

How many excellent judgments and reaſonings are framed in the mind of a man of wiſdom and ſtudy in a length of years! How many worthy and admirable notions has he been poſſeſſed of in life, both by his own reaſonings, and by his prudent and laborious collections in the courſe of his reading? But, alas! how many thouſands of them vaniſh away again and are loſt in empty air, for want of a ſtronger and more retentive memory? When a young practitioner in the law was once ſaid to contend a point of debate with that great lawyer in the laſt age, Sergeant Maynard, he is reported to have anſwered him, Alas! young man, I have forgot much more law than ever thou haſt learnt or read.

What an unknown and unſpeakable happineſs would it be to a man of judgment, and who is engaged in the purſuit of knowledge, if he had but a power of ſtamping all his own beſt ſentiments upon his memory in ſome indelible characters; and if he could but imprint every valuable paragraph and ſentiment of the moſt

moſt excellent authors he has read upon his mind, with the ſame ſpeed and facility with which he read them? If a man of good genius and ſagacity could but retain and ſurvey all thoſe numerous, thoſe wiſe and beautiful ideas at once, which have ever paſſed through his thoughts upon any one ſubject, how admirably would he be furniſhed to paſs a juſt judgment about all preſent objects and occurrences? What a glorious entertainment would fill and felicitate his ſpirit, if he could graſp all theſe in a ſingle ſurvey; as the ſkilful eye of a painter runs over a fine and complicate piece of hiſtory wrought by the hand of a Titian or a Raphael, views the whole ſcene at once, and feeds himſelf with the extenſive delight? But theſe are joys that do not belong to mortality.

Thus far I have indulged ſome looſe and unconnected thoughts and remarks with regard to the different powers of wit, memory, and judgment; for it was very difficult to throw them into a regular form or method without more room. Let us now with more regularity treat of the memory alone.

Though the memory be a natural faculty of the mind of man, and belongs to ſpirits which are not incarnate, yet it is greatly aſſiſted or hindered, and much diverſified by the brain or the animal nature, to which the ſoul is united in this preſent ſtate. But what part of the brain that is, wherein the images of things lie treaſured up, is very hard for us to determine with certainty. It is moſt probable that thoſe very fibres, pores, or traces of the brain, which aſſiſt at the firſt idea or perception of any object, are the ſame which aſſiſt alſo at the recollection of it: and then it will follow that the memory has no ſpecial part of the brain devoted to its own ſervice, but uſes all theſe parts in general which ſubſerve our ſenſations, as well as our thinking and reaſoning powers.

As the memory grows and improves in young perſons from their childhood, and decays in old age, ſo it may be increaſed by art and labour, and proper exerciſe; or it may be injured and quite ſpoiled by ſloth, or by a diſeaſe, or a ſtroke on the head. There are ſome reaſonings on this ſubject which make it evident,

that

that the goodneſs of a memory depends in a great degree upon the conſiſtence and the temperature of that part of the brain which is appointed to aſſiſt the exerciſe of all our ſenſible and intellectual faculties.

So for inſtance, in children; they perceive and forget a hundred things in an hour; the brain is ſo ſoft that it receives immediately all impreſſions like water or liquid mud, and retains ſcarcely any of them: all the traces, forms, or images which are drawn there, are immediately effaced or cloſed up again, as though you wrote with your finger on the ſurface of a river, or on a veſſel of oil.

On the contrary, in old age, men have a very feeble remembrance of things that were done of late, i. e. the ſame day, or week, or year; the brain is grown ſo hard that the preſent images or ſtrokes make little or no impreſſion, and therefore they immediately vaniſh: Priſco, in his ſeventy-eight year, will tell long ſtories of things done when he was in the battle at the Boyne almoſt fifty years ago, and when he ſtudied at Oxford ſeven years before; for thoſe impreſſions were made when the brain was more ſuſceptive of them; they have been deeply engraven at the proper ſeaſon, and therefore they remain. But words or things which he lately ſpoke or did, they are immediately forgotten, becauſe the brain is now grown more dry and ſolid in its conſiſtence, and receives not much more impreſſion than if you wrote with your finger on a floor of clay, or a plaſtered wall.

But in the middle ſtage of life, or it may be from fifteen to fifty years of age, the memory is generally in its happieſt ſtate, the brain eaſily receives and long retains the images and traces which are impreſſed upon it, and the natural ſpirits are more active to range theſe little infinite unknown figures of things in their proper cells or cavities, to preſerve and recollect them.

Whatſoever therefore keeps the brain in its beſt temper and conſiſtence may be a help to preſerve the memory: but exceſs of wine, or luxury of any kind, as well as exceſs in the ſtudies of learning or the buſineſſes of life, may overwhelm the memory, by overſtraining and weakening the fibres of the brain, over-waſting

the ſpirits, injuring the true conſiſtence of that tender ſubſtance, and confounding the images that are laid up there.

A good memory has theſe ſeveral qualifications, (1.) It is ready to receive and admit with great eaſe the various ideas both of words and things which are learned or taught. (2.) It is large and copious to treaſure up theſe ideas in great number and variety. (3.) It is ſtrong and durable to retain for a conſiderable time thoſe words or thoughts which are committed to it. (4.) It is faithful and active to ſuggeſt and recollect, upon every proper occaſion, all thoſe words or thoughts which have been recommended to its care, or treaſured up in it.

Now in every one of theſe qualifications, a memory may be injured, or may be improved: yet I ſhall not inſiſt diſtinctly on theſe particulars, but only in general propoſe a few rules or directions, whereby this noble faculty of memory, in all its branches and qualifications, may be preſerved or aſſiſted, and ſhew what are the practices that both by reaſon and experience have been found of happy influence to this purpoſe.

There is one great and general direction which belongs to the improvement of other powers as well as of the memory, and that is, to keep it always in due and proper exerciſe. Many acts by degrees form a habit, and thereby the ability or power is ſtrengthened and made more ready to appear again in action. Our memories ſhould be uſed and inured from childhood to bear a moderate quantity of knowledge let into them early, and they will thereby become ſtrong for uſe and ſervice. As any limb well and duly exerciſed grows ſtronger, the nerves of the body are corroborated thereby. Milo took up a calf, and daily carried it on his ſhoulders: as the calf grew his ſtrength grew alſo, and he at laſt arrived at firmneſs of joints enough to bear the bull.

Our memories will be in a great meaſure moulded and formed, improved or injured, according to the exerciſe of them. If we never uſe them they will be almoſt loſt. Thoſe who are wont to converſe or read about a few things only, will retain but a few in their memory:

memory: thoſe who are uſed to remember things but for an hour, and charge their memories with it no longer, will retain them but an hour before they vaniſh. And let words be remembered as well as things, that ſo you may acquire a *copia verborum* as well as *rerum*, and be more ready to expreſs your mind on all occaſions.

Yet there ſhould be a caution given in ſome caſes: the memory of a child, or any infirm perſon, ſhould not be overburdened; for a limb or a joint may be overſtrained by being too much loaded, and its natural power never be recovered. Teachers ſhould wiſely judge of the power and conſtitution of youth, and impoſe no more on them than they are able to bear with cheerfulneſs and improvement.

And particularly they ſhould take care, that the memory of the learner be not too much crowded with a tumultuous heap or overbearing multitude of documents or ideas at one time; this is the way to remember nothing; one idea effaces another. An overgreedy graſp does not retain the largeſt handful. But it is the exerciſe of memory with a due moderation that is one general rule towards the improvement of it.

The particular rules are ſuch as theſe:

1. Due attention and diligence to learn and know things which we would commit to our remembrance, is a rule of great neceſſity in this caſe. When the attention is ſtrongly fixed to any particular ſubject, all that is ſaid concerning it makes a deeper impreſſion upon the mind. There are ſome perſons who complain they cannot remember divine or human diſcourſes which they hear, when in truth their thoughts are wandering half the time, or they hear with ſuch coldneſs and indifference, and a trifling temper of ſpirit, that it is no wonder the things which are read or ſpoken make but a ſlight impreſſion on the brain, and get no firm footing in the ſeat of memory, but ſoon vaniſh and are loſt.

It is needful therefore, if we would maintain a long remembrance of the things which we read or hear, that we ſhould engage our delight and pleaſure in thoſe ſubjects, and uſe the other methods which are before

preſcribed, in order to fix the attention. Sloth, indolence, and idleneſs, will no more bleſs the mind with intellectual riches, than it will fill the hand with gain, the field with corn, or the purſe with treaſure.

Let it be added alſo, that not only the ſlothful and the negligent deprive themſelves of proper knowledge for the furniture of their memory, but ſuch as appear to have active ſpirits, who are ever ſkimming over the ſurface of things with a volatile temper, will fix nothing in their mind. Vario will ſpend whole mornings in running over looſe and unconnected pages, and with freſh curioſity is ever glancing over new words and ideas that ſtrike his preſent fancy: he is fluttering over a thouſand objects of art and ſcience, and yet treaſures up but little knowledge. There muſt be the labour and the diligence of cloſe attention to particular ſubjects of thought and inquiry, which only can impreſs what we read or think of upon the remembering faculty in man.

2. Clear and diſtinct apprehenſion of the things which we commit to memory, is neceſſary in order to make them ſtick and dwell there. If we would remember words, or learn the names of perſons or things, we ſhould have them recommended to our memory by clear and diſtinct pronunciation, ſpelling, or writing. If we would treaſure up the ideas of things, notions, propoſitions, arguments, and ſciences, theſe ſhould be recommended alſo to our memory by a clear and diſtinct perception of them. Faint, glimmering, and confuſed ideas will vaniſh like images ſeen in twilight. Every thing which we learn ſhould be conveyed to the underſtanding in the plaineſt expreſſions without any ambiguity, that we may not miſtake what we deſire to remember. This is a general rule whether we would employ the memory about words or things, though it muſt be confeſt that mere ſounds and words are much harder to get by heart than the knowledge of things and real images.

For this reaſon, take heed (as I have often before warned) that you do not take up with words inſtead of things, nor mere ſounds inſtead of real ſentiments and ideas. Many a lad forgets what has been taught him, merely

merely becauſe he never well underſtood it: he never clearly and diſtinctly took in the meaning of thoſe ſounds and ſyllables which he was required to get by heart.

This is one true reaſon why boys make ſo poor a proficiency in learning the Latin tongue, under maſters who teach them by grammars and rules written in Latin, of which I have ſpoken before. And this is a common caſe with children when they learn their catechiſms in their early days. The language and the ſentiments conveyed in thoſe catechiſms are far above the underſtanding of creatures of that age, and they have no tolerable ideas under the words. This makes the anſwers much harder to be remembered, and in truth they learn nothing but words without ideas; and if they are ever ſo perfect in repeating the words, yet they know nothing of divinity.

And for this reaſon it is a neceſſary rule in teaching children the principles of religion, that they ſhould be expreſſed in very plain, eaſy, and familiar words, brought as low as poſſible down to their underſtandings, according to their different ages and capacities, and thereby they will obtain ſome uſeful knowledge when the words are treaſured up in their memory, becauſe at the ſame time they will treaſure up thoſe divine ideas too.

3. Method and regularity in the things we commit to memory is neceſſary in order to make them take more effectual poſſeſſion of the mind, and abide there long. As much as ſyſtematical learning is decried by ſome vain and humorous triflers of the age, it is certainly the happieſt way to furniſh the mind with a variety of knowledge.

Whatſoever you would truſt to your memory, let it be diſpoſed in a proper method, connected well together, and referred to diſtinct and particular heads or claſſes, both general and particular. An apothecary's boy will much ſooner learn all the medicines in his maſter's ſhop, when they are ranged in boxes or on ſhelves according to their diſtinct natures, whether herbs, drugs, or minerals, whether leaves or roots, whether chemical or Galenical preparations, whether

ſimple or compound, &c. and when they are placed in ſome order according to their nature, their fluidity, or their conſiſtence, &c. in phials, bottles, gallipots, caſes, drawers, &c. So the genealogy of a family is more eaſily learnt when you begin at ſome great grandfather as the root, and diſtinguiſh the ſtock, the large boughs, the leſſer branches, the twigs, and the buds, till you come down to the preſent infants of the houſe. And indeed all ſorts of arts and ſciences taught in a method ſomething of this kind, are more happily committed to the mind or memory.

I might give another plain ſimile to confirm the truth of this. What horſe or carriage can take up and bear away all the various, rude, and unwieldly loppings of a branchy tree at once? But if they are divided yet further, ſo as to be laid cloſe, and bound up in a more uniform manner into ſeveral faggots, perhaps thoſe loppings may be all carried as one ſingle load or burden.

The mutual dependence of things on each other help the memory of both. A wiſe connexion of the parts of a diſcourſe in a rational method, gives great advantage to the reader or hearer in order to his remembrance of it. Therefore many mathematical demonſtrations in a long train may be remembered much better than a heap of ſentences which have no connexion. The book of Proverbs, at leaſt from the tenth chapter and onwards, is much harder to remember than the book of Pſalms for this reaſon; and ſome Chriſtians have told me, that they remember what is written in the Epiſtle to the Romans, and that to the Hebrews, much better than many others of the ſacred Epiſtles, becauſe there is more exact method and connexion obſerved in them.

He that would learn to remember a ſermon which he hears, ſhould acquaint himſelf by degrees with the method in which the ſeveral important parts of it are delivered. It is a certain fault in a multitude of preachers, that they utterly neglect method in their harangues: or at leaſt they refuſe to render their method viſible and ſenſible to the hearers. One would be tempted to think it was for fear leſt their auditors

ſhould

should remember too much of their sermons, and prevent their preaching them three or four times over: but I have candour enough to persuade myself, that the true reason is, they imagine it to be a more modish way of preaching without particulars; I am sure it is a much more useless one. And it would be of great advantage, both to the speaker and hearer, to have discourses for the pulpit cast into a plain and easy method, and the reasons or inferences ranged in a proper order, and that under the words, *first*, *secondly*, and *thirdly*, however they may be now fancied to sound unpolite or unfashionable: but Archbishop Tillotson did not think so in his days.

4. A frequent review and careful repetition of the things we would learn, and an abridgment of them in a narrow compass for this end, has a great influence to fix them in the memory: therefore it is that the rules of grammar, and useful examples of the variation of words, and the peculiar forms of speech in any language, are so often appointed by the master as lessons for the scholars to be frequently repeated; and they are contracted into tables for frequent review, that what is not fixed in the mind at first, may be stamped upon the memory by a perpetual survey and rehearsal.

Repetition is so very useful a practice, that Mnemon, even from his youth to his old age, never read a book without making some small points, dashes, or hooks in the margin, to mark what parts of the discourse were proper for a review: and when he came to the end of a section or chapter, he always shut his book, and recollected all the sentiments or expressions he had remarked, so that he could give a tolerable analysis and abstract of every treatise he had read, just after he had finished it. Thence he became so well furnished with a rich variety of knowledge.

Even when a person is hearing a sermon or a lecture, he may give his thoughts leave now and then to step back so far as to recollect the several heads of it from the beginning, two or three times before the lecture or sermon is finished: the omission or the loss of a sentence or two among the amplifications, is richly compensated, by preserving in the mind the method

and order of the whole diſcourſe in the moſt important branches of it.

If we would fix in the memory the diſcourſes we hear, or what we deſign to ſpeak, let us abſtract them into brief compends, and review them often. Lawyers and divines have need of ſuch aſſiſtances: they write down ſhort notes or hints of the principal heads of what they deſire to commit to their memory, in order to preach or plead; for ſuch abſtracts and epitomes may be reviewed much ſooner, and the ſeveral amplifying ſentiments or ſentences will be more eaſily invented or recollected in their proper places. The art of ſhort hand is of excellent uſe for this as well as other purpoſes. It muſt be acknowledged, that thoſe who ſcarcely ever take a pen in their hands to write ſhort notes or hints of what they are to ſpeak or learn, who never try to caſt things into method, or to contract the ſurvey of them, in order to commit them to their memory, had need to have a double degree of that natural power of retaining and recollecting what they read or hear, or intend to ſpeak.

Do not plunge yourſelf into other buſineſſes or ſtudies, amuſements or recreations, immediately after you have attended upon inſtruction, if you can well avoid it. Get time if poſſible to recollect the things you have heard, that they may not be waſhed all away from the mind by a torrent of other occurrences or engagements, nor loſt in the crowd or clamour of other loud and importunate affairs.

Talking over the things which you have read with your companions on the firſt proper opportunity you have for it, is a moſt uſeful manner of review or repetition, in order to fix them upon the mind. Teach them your younger friends, in order to eſtabliſh your own knowledge while you communicate it to them. The animal powers of your tongue and of your ear, as well as your intellectual faculties, will all join together to help the memory. Hermetas ſtudied hard in a remote corner of the land, and in ſolitude, yet he became a very learned man. He ſeldom was ſo happy as to enjoy ſuitable ſociety at home, and therefore he talked over to the fields and the woods in the evening what he

he had been reading in the day, and found so considerable advantage by this practice, that he recommended it to all his friends, since he could set his *probatum* to it for seventeen years.

5. Pleasure and delight in the things we learn, gives great assistance towards the remembrance of them. Whatsoever therefore we desire that a child should commit to his memory, make it as pleasant to him as possible; endeavour to search his genius and his temper; and let him take in the instructions you give him, or the lessons you appoint him, as far as may be, in a way suited to his natural inclination. Tabellus would never learn any moral lessons till they were moulded into the form of some fiction or fable like those of Æsop, or till they put on the appearance of a parable, like those wherein our blessed Saviour taught the ignorant world: then he remembered well the emblematical instructions that were given him, and learnt to practise the moral sense and meaning of them. Young Spectorius was taught virtue, by setting before him a variety of examples of the various good qualities in human life; and he was appointed daily to repeat some story of this kind out of Valerius Maximus. The same lad was early instructed to avoid the common vices and follies of youth in the same manner. This is a kin to the method whereby the Lacedemonians trained up their children to hate drunkenness and intemperence, viz. by bringing a drunken man into their company, and shewing them what a beast he had made of himself. Such visible and sensible forms of instruction will make long and useful impressions upon the memory.

Children may be taught to remember many things in a way of sport and play. Some young creatures have learnt their letters and syllables, and the pronouncing and spelling of words, by having them pasted or written upon many little flat tables or dies. Some have been taught vocabularies of different languages, having a word on one tongue written on one side of these tablets, and the same word in another tongue on the other side of them.

There might be also many entertaining contrivances for the instruction of children in several things relating

to

to geometry, geography, and aſtronomy, in ſuch alluring and luſcy methods, which would make it moſt agreeable and laſting impreſſion on their minds.

6. The memory of uſeful things may receive conſiderable aid if they are thrown into verſe: for the numbers, and meaſures, and rhyme, according to the poeſy of different languages, have a conſiderable influence upon mankind, both to make them receive with more eaſe the things propoſed to their obſervation, and preſerve them longer in their remembrance. How many are there of the common affairs of human life, which have been taught in early years by the help of rhyme, and have been like nails faſtened in a ſure place, and rivetted by daily uſe?

So the number of the days of each month are engraven on the memory of thouſands by theſe four lines:

Thirty days have September,
June, April, and November:
February twenty-eight alone,
And all the reſt have thirty-one.

So lads have been taught frugality by ſurveying and judging of their own expences by theſe three lines:

Compute the pence but of one day's expence,
So many pounds and angels, groats and pence,
Are ſpent in one whole year's circumference.

For the number of days in a year is three hundred ſixty-five, which number of pence makes one pound, one angel, one groat, and one penny.

So have rules of health been preſcribed in the book called Schola Salernitana, and many a perſon has preſerved himſelf doubtleſs from evening gluttony, and the pains and diſeaſes conſequent upon it, by theſe two lines:

Ex magna cœna ſtomacho ſit maxima pœna:
Ut ſis nocte levis, ſit tibi cœna brevis.

Engliſhed:

Engliſhed:

To be eaſy all night,
Let your ſupper be light:
Or elſe you'll complain
Of a ſtomach in pain.

And a hundred proverbial ſentences in various languages are formed into rhyme or a verſe, whereby they are made to ſtick upon the memory of old and young.

It is from this principle that moral rules have been caſt into a poetic mould from all antiquity. So the golden verſes of the Pythagoreans in Greek; Cato's diſtiches *De Moribus* in Latin; Lilly's precepts to ſcholars called *Qui mihi*, with many others; and this has been done with very good ſucceſs. A line or two of this kind recurring on the memory, have often guarded youth from a temptation to vice and folly, as well as put them in mind of their preſent duty.

It is for this reaſon alſo that the genders, declenſions, and variations of nouns and verbs, have been taught in verſe, by thoſe who have complied with the prejudice of long cuſtom, to teach Engliſh children the Latin tongue by rules written in Latin: and truly thoſe rude heaps of words and terminations of an unknown tongue would have never been ſo happily learnt by heart by a hundred thouſand boys without this ſmoothing artifice; nor indeed do I know any thing elſe can be ſaid with good reaſon to excuſe or relieve the obvious abſurdities of this practice.

When you would remember new things or words, endeavour to aſſociate and connect them with ſome words or things which you have well known before, and which are fixed and eſtabliſhed in your memory. This aſſociation of ideas is of great importance and force, and may be of excellent uſe in many inſtances of human life. One idea which is familiar to the mind, connected with others which are new and ſtrange, will bring thoſe new ideas into eaſy remembrance. Maronides had got the firſt hundred lines of Virgil's Æneis printed up in his memory ſo perfectly, that he knew not only

only the order and number of every verſe from one to a hundred in perfection, but the order and number of every word in each verſe alſo; and by this means he would undertake to remember two or three hundred names of perſons or things by ſome rational or fantaſtic connexion between ſome word in the verſe, and ſome letter, ſyllable, property, or accident of the name or thing to be remembered, even though they had been repeated but once or twice at moſt in his hearing. Animato practiſed much the ſame art of memory, by getting the Latin names of twenty-two animals into his head according to the alphabet, viz. *aſinus*, *baſiliſcus*, *canis*, *draco*, *elephas*, *felis*, *gryphus*, *hircus*, *juvencus*, *leo*, *mulus*, *noctua*, *ovis*, *panthera*, *quadrupes*, *rhinoceros*, *ſimia*, *taurus*, *urſus*, *xiphias*, *hyæna* or *yæna*, *zibetta*. Moſt of theſe he divided alſo into four parts, viz. head and body, feet, fins or wings, and tail, and by ſome arbitrary or chimerical attachment of each of theſe to a word or thing which he deſired to remember, he committed them to the care of his memory, and that with good ſucceſs.

It is alſo by this aſſociation of ideas, that we may better imprint any new idea upon the memory, by joining with it ſome circumſtance of the time, place, company, &c. wherein we firſt obſerved, heard or learnt it. If we would recover an abſent idea, it is uſeful to recollect theſe circumſtances of time, place, &c. The ſubſtance will many times be recovered and brought to the thought by recollecting the ſhadow: a man recurs to our fancy by remembering his garment, his ſize, or ſtature, his office, or employment, &c. A beaſt, bird, or fiſh, by its colour, figure, or motion, by the cage, or court-yard, or ciſtern wherein it was kept.

To this head alſo we may refer that remembrance of names and things which may be derived from our recollection of their likeneſs to other things which we know; either their reſemblance in name, character, form, accident, or any thing that belongs to them. An idea or word which has been loſt or forgotten, has been often recovered by hitting upon ſome other kindred word or idea, which has the neareſt reſemblance

ſemblance to it, and that in the letters, ſyllables, or ſound of the name, as well as properties of the thing.

If we would remember Hippocrates, or Galen, or Paracelſus, think of a phyſician's name, beginning with H, G, or P. If we ſhall remember Ovidius Naſo, we may repreſent a man with a great noſe; if Plato, we may think upon a perſon with large ſhoulders; if Chriſpus, we ſhall fancy another with curled hair; and ſo of other things.

And ſometimes a new or ſtrange idea may be fixed in the memory, by conſidering its contrary or oppoſite. So if we cannot hit on the word Goliath, the remembrance of David may recover it; or the name of a Trojan man be recovered by thinking of a Greek, &c.

8. In ſuch caſes wherein it may be done, ſeek after a local memory, or a remembrance of what you have read by the ſide or page where it is written or printed; whether the right or the left, whether at the top, the middle, or the bottom; whether at the beginning of a chapter or a paragraph, or the end of it. It has been ſome advantage, for this reaſon, to accuſtom one's ſelf to books of the ſame edition: and it has been of conſtant and ſpecial uſe to divines and private Chriſtians, to be furniſhed with ſeveral Bibles of the ſame edition, that whereſoever they are, whether in their chamber, parlour, or ſtudy, in the younger or elder years of life, they may find the chapters and verſes ſtanding in the ſame parts of the page.

This is alſo a great conveniency to be obſerved by printers in the new editions of Grammars, Pſalms, Teſtaments, &c. to print every chapter, paragraph, or verſe, in the ſame part of the page as the former, that ſo it may yield an happy aſſiſtance to thoſe young learners, who find, and even feel, the advantage of a local memory.

9. Let every thing we deſire to remember be fairly and diſtinctly written and divided into periods, with large characters in the beginning, for by this means we ſhall the more readily imprint the matter and words on our minds, and recollect them with a glance, the more remarkable the writing appears to the eye. This ſenſe conveys the ideas to the fancy better than any other;

and

and what we have ſeen is not ſo ſoon forgotten as what we have only heard. What Horace affirms of the mind or paſſions may be ſaid alſo of the memory.

Segnius irritant animos demiſſa per aurem
Quam quæ ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus, et quæ
Ipſe ſibi tradit ſpectator.

Applied thus in Engliſh:

Sounds which addreſs the ear are loſt and die
In one ſhort hour; but that which ſtrikes the eye
Lives long upon the mind; the faithful ſight
Engraves the knowledge with a beam of light.

For the aſſiſtance of weak memories, the firſt letters or words of every period, in every page, may be written in diſtinct colours; yellow, green, red, black, &c. and if you obſerve the ſame order of colours in the following ſentences, it may be ſtill the better. This will make a great impreſſion, and may much aid the memory.

Under this head we may take notice of the advantage which the memory gains, by having the ſeveral objects of our learning drawn out into ſchemes and tables; matters of mathematical ſcience and natural philoſophy are not only let into the underſtanding, but preſerved in the memory by figures and diagrams. The ſituation of the ſeveral parts of the earth are better learnt by one day's converſing with a map or ſea chart, than by mere reading the deſcription of their ſituation a hundred times over in books of geography. So the conſtellations in aſtronomy, and their poſition in the heavens, are more eaſily remembered by hemiſpheres of the ſtars well drawn. It is by having ſuch ſort of memorials, figures, and tables hung round our ſtudies, or places of reſidence or reſort, that our memory of theſe things will be greatly aſſiſted and improved, as I have ſhewn at large in the twentieth chapter, of the Uſe of the Sciences.

I might add here alſo, that once writing over what we deſign to remember, and giving due attention to what we write, will fix it more in the mind than reading it five times. And in the ſame manner, if we had

a plan of the naked lines of longitude and latitude, projected on the meridian printed for this uſe, a learner might much more ſpeedily advance himſelf in the knowledge of geography by his own drawing the figures of all the parts of the world upon it by imitation, than by many days ſurvey of a map of the world ſo printed. The ſame alſo may be ſaid concerning the conſtellations of heaven, drawn by the learner on a naked projection of the circles of the ſphere upon the plane of the equator.

10. It has ſometimes been the practice of men to imprint names or ſentences on their memory, by taking the firſt letters of every word of that ſentence, or of thoſe names, and making a new word out of them. So the name of the Maccabees is borrowed from the firſt letters of the Hebrew words which make that ſentence, Mi Camoka Baelim Jehovah, i. e. Who is like thee among the gods? which was written on their banners. Jeſus Chriſt, our Saviour, hath been called a fiſh, in Greek ΙΧΘΥΣ, by the fathers, becauſe theſe are the firſt letters of thoſe Greek words, Jeſus Chriſt, God's Son, the Saviour. So the word vibgyor teaches us to remember the order of the ſeven original colours, as they appear by the ſun-beams caſt through a priſm on white paper, or formed by the ſun in a rainbow, according to the different refrangibility of the rays, viz. violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red.

In this manner the Hebrew grammarians teach their ſtudents to remember the letters which change their natural pronunciation by the inſcription of a *dageſh*, by gathering theſe ſix letters, beth, gimel, daleth, caph, pe, and thau, into the word *begadkephat*; and that they might not forget the letters named quieſcent, viz. *a*, *h*, *o*, and *i*, they are joined in the word *ahevi*. So the univerſal and particular propoſitions in logic, are remembered by the words *barbara*, *celarent*, *Darii*, &c.

Other artificial helps to memory may be juſt mentioned here.

Dr Grey, in his book called Memoria Technica, has exchanged the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 for ſome conſonants, b, d, t, f, l, y, p, k, n, and ſome vowels, a, e, i, o, u, and ſeveral diphthongs, and thereby formed words that denote numbers, which

may be more eaſily remembered; and Mr Lowe has improved his ſcheme, in a ſmall pamphlet called Mnemonics delineated, whereby, in ſeven leaves, he has comprized almoſt an infinity of things in ſcience and in common life, and reduced them to a ſort of meaſure like Latin verſe; though the words may be ſuppoſed to be very barbarous, being ſuch a mixture of vowels and conſonants as are very unfit for harmony.

But after all, the very writers on this ſubject have confeſſed, that ſeveral of theſe artificial helps of memory are ſo cumberſome as not to be ſuitable to every temper or perſon; nor are they of any uſe for the delivery of a diſcourſe by memory, nor of much ſervice in learning the ſciences: but they may be ſometimes practiſed for the aſſiſting our remembrance of certain ſentences, numbers, or names.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of determining a Queſtion.

I.

WHEN a ſubject is propoſed to your thoughts, conſider whether it be knowable at all, or no; and then whether it be not above the reach of your inquiry and knowledge in the preſent ſtate; and remember that it is a great waſte of time to buſy yourſelves too much amongſt unſearchables: the chief uſe of theſe ſtudies is to keep the mind humble, by finding its own ignorance and weakneſs.

II. CONSIDER again whether the matter be worthy of your inquiry at all; and then, how far it may be worthy of your preſent ſearch and labour according to your age, your time of life, your ſtation in the world, your capacity, your profeſſion, your chief deſign and end. There are many things worth inquiry to one man, which are not ſo to another; and there are things that may deſerve the ſtudy of the ſame perſon in one part of life, which would be improper or impertinent at another. To read books of the art of preaching, or diſputes

diſputes about church-diſcipline, are proper for a theological ſtudent in the end of his academical ſtudies, but not at the beginning of them. To purſue mathematical ſtudies very largely, may be uſeful for a profeſſor of philoſophy, but not for a divine.

III. Consider whether the ſubject of your inquiry be eaſy or difficult; whether you have ſufficient foundation or ſkill, furniture and advantages, for the purſuit of it. It would be madneſs for a young ſtatuary to attempt at firſt to carve a Venus or a Mercury, and eſpecially without proper tools. And it is equal folly for a man to pretend to make great improvements in natural philoſophy without due experiments.

IV. Consider whether the ſubject be any ways uſeful or no, before you engage in the ſtudy of it; often put this queſtion to yourſelves, *Cui bono?* to what purpoſe? What end will it attain? Is it for the glory of God, for the good of men, for your own advantage, for the removal of any natural or moral evil, for the attainment of any natural or moral good? Will the profit be equal to the labour? There are many ſubtle impertinencies learnt in the ſchools, many painful trifles even among the mathematical theorems and problems, many *difficiles nugæ*, or laborious follies of various kinds, which ſome ingenious men have been engaged in. A due reflection upon theſe things will call the mind away from vain amuſements, and ſave much time.

V. Consider what tendency it has to make you wiſer and better, as well as to make you more learned; and thoſe queſtions which tend to wiſdom and prudence in our conduct among men, as well as piety toward God, are doubtleſs more important, and preferable beyond all thoſe inquiries which only improve our knowledge in mere ſpeculations.

VI. If the queſtion appear to be well worth your diligent application, and you are furniſhed with the neceſſary requiſites to purſue it, then conſider whether it be dreſt up and entangled in more words than is needful, and contain or include more complicated ideas than is neceſſary; and if ſo, endeavour to reduce it to a greater

greater ſimplicity and plainneſs, which will make the inquiry and argument eaſier and plainer all the way.

VII. If it be ſtated in an improper, obſcure, or irregular form, it may be meliorated by changing the phraſe, or tranſporting the parts of it; but be careful always to keep the grand and important point of inquiry the ſame in your new ſtating the queſtion. Little tricks and deceits of ſophiſtry, by ſliding in, or leaving out ſuch words as entirely change the queſtion, ſhould be abandoned and renounced by all fair diſputants and honeſt ſearchers after truth.

The ſtating a queſtion with clearneſs and juſtice goes a great way many times toward the anſwering it. The greateſt part of true knowledge lies in a diſtinct perception of things which are in themſelves diſtinct; and ſome men give more light and knowledge by the bare ſtating of the queſtion with perſpicuity and juſtice, than others by talking of it in groſs confuſion for whole hours together. To ſtate a queſtion is but to ſeparate and diſentangle the parts of it from one another, as well from every thing which doth not concern the queſtion, and then to lay the diſentangled parts of the queſtion in due order and method: oftentimes without more ado this fully reſolves the doubt, and ſhews the mind where the truth lies, without argument or diſpute.

VIII. If the queſtion relate to an axiom or firſt principle of truth, remember that a long train of conſequences may depend upon it, therefore it ſhould not be ſuddenly admitted or received.

It is not enough to determine the truth of a propoſition, much leſs to raiſe it to the honour of an axiom or firſt principle, to ſay, that it has been believed through many ages, that it has been received by many nations, that it is almoſt univerſally acknowledged, or nobody denies it, that it is eſtabliſhed by human laws, or that temporal penalties or reproaches will attend the diſbelief of it.

IX. Nor is it enough to forbid any propoſition the title of an axiom, becauſe it has been denied by ſome perſons, and doubted of by others; for ſome perſons have been unreaſonably credulous, and others have been as unreaſonably ſceptical. Then only ſhould a propoſition

be

be called an axiom or a ſelf-evident truth, when by a moderate attention to the ſubject and predicate, their connexion appears in ſo plain a light, and ſo clear an evidence, as needs no third idea, or middle term, to prove them to be connected.

X. WHILE you are in ſearch after truth in queſtions of a doubtful nature, or ſuch as you have not yet thoroughly examined, keep up a juſt indifference to either ſide of the queſtion, if you would be led honeſtly into the truth: for a deſire or inclination leaning to either ſide, biaſſes the judgment ſtrangely; whereas by this indifference for every thing but truth, you will be excited to examine fairly inſtead of preſuming, and your aſſent will be ſecured from going beyond your evidence.

XI. FOR the moſt part people are born to their opinions, and never queſtion the truth of what their family, or their country, or their party profeſs. They clothe their minds as they do their bodies, after the faſhion in vogue, nor one of a hundred ever examines their principles. It is ſuſpected of lukewarmneſs to ſuppoſe examination neceſſary, and it will be charged as a tendency to apoſtacy if we go about to examine them. Perſons are applauded for preſuming they are in the right, and (as Mr Locke ſaith) he that conſiders and inquires into the reaſon of things is counted a foe to orthodoxy, becauſe poſſibly he may deviate from ſome of the received doctrines. And thus men without any induſtry or acquiſition of their own, (lazy and idle as they are), inherit local truths, i. e. the truths of that place where they live, and are inured to aſſent without evidence.

This hath a long and unhappy influence; for if a man can bring his mind once to be poſitive and fierce for propoſitions whoſe evidence he hath never examined, and that in matters of the greateſt concernment, he will naturally follow this ſhort and eaſy way of judging and believing in caſes of leſs moment, and build all his opinions upon inſufficient grounds.

XII. IN determining a queſtion, eſpecially when it is a matter of difficulty and importance, do not take up with partial examination, but turn your thoughts on all ſides, to gather in all the light you can toward the

ſolution of it. Take time, and uſe all the helps that are to be attained before you fully determine, except only where preſent neceſſity of action calls for ſpeedy determination.

If you would know what may be called a partial examination, take theſe inſtances, viz.

When you examine an object of ſenſe, or inquire into ſome matter of ſenſation at too great a diſtance from the object, or in an inconvenient ſituation of it, or under any indiſpoſition of the organs, or any diſguiſe whatſoever relating to the medium or the organ of the object itſelf; or when you examine it by the ſenſe only, where others might be employed; or when you inquire into it by ſenſe only, without the uſe of the underſtanding, and judgment, and reaſon.

If it be a queſtion which is to be determined by reaſon and argument, then your examination is partial, when you turn the queſtion only in one light, and do not turn it on all ſides; when you look upon it only in its relations and aſpects to one ſort of objects, and not to another; when you conſider only the advantages of it, and the reaſons for it, and neglect to think of the reaſons againſt it, and never ſurvey its inconveniences too; when you determine on a ſudden, before you have given yourſelf a due time for weighing all circumſtances, &c.

Again, if it be a queſtion of fact depending upon the report or teſtimony of men, your examination is but partial, when you inquire only what one man or a few ſay, and avoid the teſtimony of others; when you only aſk what thoſe report who were not eye or ear witneſſes, and neglect thoſe who ſaw and heard it; when you content yourſelf with mere looſe and general talk about it, and never enter into particulars; or when there are many who deny the fact, and you never concern yourſelf about their reaſons for denying it, but reſolve to believe only thoſe who affirm it.

There is yet further a fault in your partial examination of any queſtion, when you reſolve to determine it by natural reaſon only, where you might be aſſiſted by ſupernatural revelation; or, when you decide the point by ſome word or ſentence, or by ſome part of revelation,

velation, without comparing it with other parts, which might give further light and better help to determine the meaning.

It is alſo a culpable partiality if you examine ſome doubtful or pretended viſion or revelation without the uſe of reaſon; or without the uſe of that revelation, which is undoubted and ſufficiently proved to be divine. Theſe are all inſtances of imperfect examination, and we ſhould never determine a queſtion by one or two lights, where we may have the advantage of three or four.

XIII. Take heed leſt ſome darling notion, ſome favourite hypotheſis, ſome beloved doctrine, or ſome common but unexamined opinion, be made a teſt of the truth or falſehood of all other propoſitions about the ſame ſubject. Dare not build much upon ſuch a notion or doctrine till it be very fully examined, accurately adjuſted, and ſufficiently confirmed. Some perſons, by indulging ſuch a practice, have been led into long ranks of errors; they have found themſelves involved in a train of miſtakes, by taking up ſome pretty hypotheſis or principle, either in philoſophy, politics, or religion, upon ſlight and inſufficient grounds, and eſtabliſhing that as a teſt and rule by which to judge of all other things.

XIV. For the ſame reaſon, have a care of ſuddenly determining any one queſtion on which the determination of any kindred or parallel caſes will eaſily or naturally follow. Take heed of receiving any wrong turn in your early judgment of things; be watchful, as far as poſſible, againſt any falſe bias which may be given to the underſtanding, eſpecially in younger years. The indulgence of ſome one filly opinion, or the giving credit to one fooliſh fable, lays the mind open to be impoſed upon by many. The ancient Romans were taught to believe that Romulus and Remus, the founders of their ſtate and empire, were expoſed in the woods, and nurſed by a wolf: this ſtory prepared their minds for the reception of any tales of the like nature relating to other countries. Trogus Pompeius would enforce the belief, that one of the ancient kings of Spain was alſo nurſed and ſuckled by a hart, from the fable of Romulus and Remus. It was by the ſame influence they learned to give up their

their hopes and fears to omens and ſoothſaying, when they were once perſuaded that the greatneſs of their empire, and the glory of Romulus their founder, were predicted by the happy omen of twelve vultures appearing to him when he ſought where to build the city. They readily received all the following legends of prodigies, auguries, and prognoſtics, for many ages together, with which Livy has furniſhed his huge hiſtory.

So the child who is once taught to believe any one occurrence to be a good or evil omen, or any day of the month or week to be lucky or unlucky, hath a wide inroad made on the ſoundneſs of his underſtanding in the following judgments of his life; he lies ever open to all the ſilly impreſſions and idle tales of nurſes, and imbibes many a fooliſh ſtory with greedineſs, which he muſt unlearn again if ever he become acquainted with truth and wiſdom.

XV. Have a care of intereſting your warm and religious zeal in thoſe matters which are not ſufficiently evident in themſelves, or which are not fully and thoroughly examined and proved: for this zeal, whether right or wrong, when it is once engaged, will have a powerful influence to eſtabliſh your own minds in thoſe doctrines which are really doubtful, and to ſtop up all the avenues of further light. This will bring upon the ſoul a ſort of ſacred awe and dread of hereſy; with a divine concern to maintain whatever opinion you have eſpouſed as divine, though perhaps you have eſpouſed it without any juſt evidence, and ought to have renounced it as falſe and pernicious.

We ought to be zealous for the moſt important points of our religion, and to contend earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the ſaints; but we ought not to employ this ſacred fervour of ſpirit in the ſervice of any article, till we have ſeen it made out with plain and ſtrong conviction, that it is a neceſſary or important point of faith or practice, and is either an evident dictate of the light of nature, or an aſſured article of revelation. Zeal muſt not reign over the powers of our underſtanding, but obey them: God is the God of light and truth, a God of reaſon and order, and he never requires mankind to uſe their natural faculties amiſs

amiſs for the ſupport of his cauſe. Even the moſt myſterious and ſublime doctrines of revelation are not to be believed without a juſt reaſon for it; nor ſhould our pious affections be engaged in the defence of them, till we have plain and convincing proof that they are certainly revealed, though perhaps we may never in this world attain to ſuch clear and diſtinct ideas of them as we deſire.

XVI. As a warm zeal ought never to be employed in the defence of any revealed truth, till our reaſon be well convinced of the revelation; ſo neither ſhould wit and banter, jeſt and ridicule, ever be indulged to oppoſe and aſſault any doctrines of profeſſed revelation, till reaſon has proved they are not really revealed; and even then theſe methods ſhould be uſed very ſeldom, and with the utmoſt caution and prudence. Raillery and wit were never made to anſwer our inquiries after truth, and to determine a queſtion of rational controverſy; though they may ſometimes be ſerviceable to expoſe to contempt thoſe inconſiſtent follies which have been firſt abundantly refuted by argument; they ſerve indeed only to cover nonſenſe with ſhame, when reaſon has firſt proved it to be mere nonſenſe.

It is therefore a ſilly and moſt unreaſonable teſt which ſome of our Deiſts have introduced to judge of divine revelation, viz. To try if it will bear ridicule and laughter. They are effectually beaten in all their combats at the weapons of men, that is, reaſon and argument; and it would not be unjuſt (though it is a little uncourtly) to ſay, that they would now attack our religion with the talents of a vile animal, that is, grin and grimace.

I cannot think that a jeſter or a monkey, a droll or a puppet, can be proper judges or deciders of controverſy. That which dreſſes up all things in diſguiſe, is not likely to lead us into any juſt ſentiments about them. Plato or Socrates, Cæſar or Alexander, might have a fool's coat caſt upon any of them, and perhaps in this diſguiſe, neither the wiſdom of the one, nor the majeſty of the other, would ſecure them from a ſneer: this treatment would never inform us whether they were kings or ſlaves, whether they were fools

or

or philoſophers. The ſtrongeſt reaſoning, the beſt ſenſe, and the politeſt thoughts, may be ſet in a moſt ridiculous light by this grinning faculty: the moſt obvious axioms of eternal truth may be dreſt in a very fooliſh form, and wrapt up in artful abſurdities by this talent; but they are truth and reaſon, and good ſenſe ſtill. Euclid, with all his demonſtrations, might be ſo covered and overwhelmed with banter, that a beginner in the mathematices might be tempted to doubt whether his theorms were true or no, and to imagine they could never be uſeful. So weaker minds might be eaſily prejudiced againſt the nobleſt principle of truth and goodneſs; and the younger part of mankind might be beat off from the belief of the moſt ſerious, the moſt rational and important points, even of natural religion, by the impudent jeſts of a profane wit. The moral duties of the civil life, as well as the articles of Chriſtianity, may be painted over with the colours of folly, and expoſed upon a ſtage, ſo as to ruin all ſocial and perſonal virtue among the gay and thoughtleſs part of the world.

XVII. It ſhould be obſerved alſo, that theſe very men cry out loudly againſt the uſe of all ſevere railing and reproach in debates, all penalties and perſecutions of the ſtate, in order to convince the minds and conſciences of men, and determine points of truth and error. Now I renounce theſe penal and ſmarting methods of conviction as much as they do, and yet I think ſtill theſe are very whit as wiſe, as juſt, and as good for this purpoſe, as banter and ridicule. Why ſhould public mockery in print, or a merry joke upon a ſtage, be a better teſt of truth, than ſevere railing ſarcaſms, and public perſecutions and penalties? Why ſhould more light be derived to the underſtanding by a ſong of ſcurrilous mirth, or a witty ballad, than there is by a rude cudgel? When a profeſſor of any religion is ſet up to be laughed up, I cannot ſee how this ſhould help us to judge of the truth of his faith any better than if he were ſcourged. The jeers of a theatre, the pillory, and the whipping-poſt, are very near a-kin. When the perſon or his opinion is made the jeſt of the mob, or his

his back the ſhambles of the executioner, I think there is no more conviction in the one than in the other.

XVIII. Besides, ſuppoſing it is but barely poſſible that the great God ſhould reveal his mind and will to men by miracle, viſion, or inſpiration, it is a piece of contempt and profane inſolence to treat any tolerable or rational appearance of ſuch a revelation with jeſt and laughter, in order to find whether it be divine or no. And yet if this be a proper teſt of revelation, it may be properly applied to the true as well as the falſe, in order to diſtinguiſh it. Suppoſe a royal proclamation were ſent to a diſtant part of the kingdom, and ſome of the ſubjects ſhould doubt whether it came from the king or no; is it poſſible that wit and ridicule ſhould ever decide the point? Or would the prince ever think himſelf treated with juſt honour to have his proclamation convaſſed in this manner on a public ſtage, and become the ſport of buffoons, in order to determine the queſtion, Whether it is the word of a king or no?

Let ſuch ſort of writers go on at their deareſt peril, and ſport themſelves in their own deceivings; let them at their peril make a jeſt at the Bible, and treat the ſacred articles of Chriſtianity with ſcoff and merriment: but then let them lay aſide all their pretences to reaſon as well as religion; and as they expoſe themſelves by ſuch writings to the neglect and contempt of men, ſo let them prepare to meet the majeſty and indignation of God without timely repentance.

XIX. In reading philoſophical, moral, or religious controverſies, never raiſe your eſteem of any opinion by the aſſurance and zeal wherewith the author aſſerts it, nor by the higheſt praiſes he beſtows upon it: nor on the other hand, let your eſteem of an opinion be abated, nor your averſion to it raiſed by the ſupercilious contempt caſt upon it by a warm writer, nor by the ſovereign airs with which he condemns it. Let the force of argument alone influence your aſſent or diſſent. Take care that your ſoul be not warped or biaſſed on one ſide or the other, by any ſtrains of flattering or abuſive language; for there is no queſtion whatſoever but hath ſome ſuch ſort of defenders and oppoſers. Leave thoſe writers to their own follies, who practiſe thus

thus upon the weakneſs of their readers without argument: leave them to triumph in their own fancied poſſeſſions and victories: it is oftentimes found that their poſſeſſions are but a heap of errors, and their boaſted victories are but overbearing noiſe and clamour to ſilence the voice of truth.

In philoſophy and religion, the bigots of all parties are generally the moſt poſitive, and deal much in this ſort of argument. Sometimes theſe are the weapons of pride; for a haughty man ſuppoſes all his opinions to be infallible, and imagines the contrary ſentiments are ever ridiculous, and not worthy of notice. Sometimes theſe ways of talking are the mere arms of ignorance: the men who uſe them know little of the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion, and therefore they exult in their own vain pretences to knowledge, as though no man of ſenſe could oppoſe their opinion. They rail at an objection againſt their own ſentiments, becauſe they can find no other anſwer to it but railing. And men of learning, by their exceſſive vanity, have been ſometimes tempted into the ſame inſolent practice as well as the ignorant.

Yet let it be remembered too, that there are ſome truths ſo plain and evident, that the oppoſition to them is ſtrange, unaccountable, and almoſt monſtrous: and in vindication of ſuch truths, a writer of good ſenſe may ſometimes be allowed to uſe a degree of aſſurance, and pronounce them ſtrongly with an air of confidence, while he defends them with reaſons of convincing force.

XX. Sometimes a queſtion may be propoſed, which is of ſo large and extenſive a nature, and refers to ſuch a multitude of ſubjects, as ought not in juſtice to be determined at once by a ſingle argument or anſwer: as if one ſhould aſk me, are you a profeſſed diſciple of the Stoics or the Platoniſts? Do you receive and aſſent to the principles of Gaſſendus, Deſcartes, or Sir Iſaac Newton? Have you choſen the hypotheſis of Tycho or Copernicus? Have you devoted yourſelf to the ſentiments of Arminius or Calvin? Are your notions Epiſcopal, Preſbyterian, or Independent, &c.? I think it may be very proper in ſuch caſes not to give an anſwer in the groſs, but

but rather to enter into a detail of particulars, and explain one's own ſentiments. Perhaps there is no man, nor ſet of men upon earth, whoſe ſentiments I entirely follow. God has given me reaſon to judge for myſelf, and I though I may ſee ſufficient ground to agree to the greateſt part of the opinions of one perſon or party, yet it does by no means follow that I ſhould receive them all. Truth does not always go by the lump, nor does error tincture and ſpoil all the articles of belief that ſome one party profeſſes.

Since there are difficulties attend every ſcheme of human knowledge, it is enough for me in the main to incline to that ſide which has the feweſt difficulties; and I would endeavour, as far as poſſible, to correct the miſtakes or the harſh expreſſions of one party, by ſoftening and reconciling methods, by reducing the extremes, and by borrowing ſome of the beſt principles or phraſes from another. Cicero was one of the greateſt men of antiquity, and gives us an account of the various opinions of philoſophers in his age; but he himſelf was of the Eclectic ſect, and choſe out of each of them ſuch poſitions as in his wiſeſt judgment came neareſt to the truth.

XXI. When you are called in the courſe of life or religion to judge and determine concerning any queſtion, and to affirm or deny it, take a full ſurvey of the objections againſt it, as well as of the arguments for it, as far as your time and circumſtances admit, and ſee on which ſide the preponderation falls. If either the objections againſt any propoſition, or the arguments for the defence of it, carry in them moſt undoubted evidence, and are plainly unanſwerable, they will and ought to conſtrain the aſſent, though there may be many ſeeming probabilities on the other ſide, which at firſt ſight would flatter the judgment to favour it. But where the reaſons on both ſides are very near of equal weight, there ſuſpenſion or doubt is our duty, unleſs in caſes wherein preſent determination or practice is required, and there we muſt act according to the preſent appearing preponderation of reaſons.

XXII. In matters of moment and importance, it is our duty indeed to ſeek after certain and concluſive ar-

guments (if they can be found,) in order to determine a queſtion: but where the matter is of little conſequence, it is not worth our labour to ſpend much time in ſeeking after certainties; it is ſufficient here, if probable reaſons offer themſelves. And even in matters of greater importance, eſpecially where daily practice is neceſſary, and where we cannot attain any ſufficient or certain grounds to determine a queſtion on either ſide, we muſt then take up with ſuch probable arguments as we can arrive at. But this general rule ſhould be obſerved, viz. to take heed that our aſſent be no ſtronger, or riſe no higher in the degree of it, than the probable argument will ſupport.

XXIII. THERE are many things even in religion, as well as in philoſophy and civil life, which we believe with very different degrees of aſſent; and this is or ſhould be always regulated according to the different degrees of evidence which we enjoy: and perhaps there are a thouſand gradations in our aſſent to the things we believe, becauſe there are thouſands of circumſtances relating to different queſtions, which increaſe or diminiſh the evidence we have concerning them, and that in matters both of reaſon and revelation.

I believe there is a God, and that obedience is due to him from every reaſonable creature: this I am moſt fully aſſured of, becauſe I have the ſtrongeſt evidence, ſince it is the plain dictate both of reaſon and revelation.

Again, I believe there is a future reſurrection of the dead, becauſe ſcripture tells us ſo in the plaineſt terms, though reaſon ſays nothing of it. I believe alſo, that the ſame matter of our bodies which died (in part at leaſt) ſhall ariſe; but I am not ſo fully aſſured of this circumſtance, becauſe the revelation of it is not quite ſo clear and expreſs. Yet further, I believe that the good men who were acquainted here on earth, ſhall know each other in heaven; but my perſuaſion of it is not abſolutely certain, becauſe my aſſent to it ariſes only from circumſtantial reaſoning of men upon what God has told us, and therefore my evidences are not ſtrong beyond a poſſibility of miſtake. This direction cannot be too often repeated, that our aſſent ought always to

keep

keep pace with our evidence; and our belief of any propofition ſhould never riſe higher than the proof or evidence we have to ſupport it, nor ſhould our faith run faſter than right reaſon can encourage it.

XXIV. PERHAPS it will be objected here, Why then does our Saviour, in the hiſtories of the Goſpel, ſo much commend a ſtrong faith, and lay out both his miraculous benefits and his praiſes upon ſome of thoſe creatures of little reaſoning, who profeſt an aſſured belief of his commiſſion and power to heal them?

I anſwer, The God of nature has given every man his own reaſon to be the judge of evidence to himſelf in particular, and to direct his aſſent in all things about which he is called to judge; and even the matters of revelation are to be believed by us, becauſe our reaſon pronounces the revelation to be true. Therefore the great God will not, or cannot, in any inſtances, require us to aſſent to any thing without reaſonable or ſufficient evidence, nor to believe any propoſition more ſtrongly than what our evidence for it will ſupport. We have therefore abundant ground to believe, that thoſe perſons of whom our Saviour requires ſuch a ſtrong faith, or whom he commends for their ſtrong faith, had as ſtrong and certain evidence of his power and commiſſion from the credible and inconteſtable reports they had heard of his miracles, which were wrought on purpoſe to give evidence to his commiſſion †. Now in ſuch a caſe, both this ſtrong faith, and the open profeſſion of it, were very worthy of public encouragement and praiſe from our Saviour, becauſe of the great and public ſervice which that might prove, and the pride, and the diſtaſte of the age, made

† When our Saviour gently reproves Thomas for his unbelief, John xx. 29, he gives it in theſe words, "Becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, Thomas, thou haſt believed; bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed," i. e. bleſſed are they who, though they have not been favoured with the evidence of their ſenſes, as thou haſt been, yet have been convinced by the reaſonable and ſufficient moral evidence of the well-grounded report of others, and have believed in me upon that account. Of this moral evidence Mr Litton writes excellently well in his book of the Reſurrection of Chriſt.

againſt Jeſus the man of Nazareth, when he appeared as the Meſſiah.

And beſides all this, it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, with regard to ſome of thoſe ſtrong exerciſes of faith which are required and commended, that theſe believers had ſome further hints of inward evidence and immediate revelation from God himſelf; as when St Peter confeſſes Chriſt to be the Son of God, Matth. xvi. 16, 17. our bleſſed Saviour commends him, ſaying, "Bleſſed art thou, Simion Bar-jona;" but he adds, "Fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

And the ſame may be ſaid concerning the faith of miracles, the exerciſe whereof was ſometimes required of the diſciples and others, i. e. when by inward and divine influences God aſſured them ſuch miracles ſhould be wrought, their obedience to and compliance with theſe divine illuminations was expected and commended. Now this ſupernatural inſpiration carried ſufficient evidence with it to them, as well as to the ancient prophets, though we who never felt it are not ſo capable to judge and diſtinguiſh it.

XXV. What is ſaid before concerning truth or doctrines, may be alſo affirmed concerning duties; the reaſon of both is the ſame; as the one are truths for our ſpeculation, the others are truths for our practice. Duties which are expreſsly required in the plain language of ſcripture, or dictated by the moſt evident reaſoning upon firſt principles, ought to bind our conſciences more than thoſe which are but dubiouſly inferred, and that only from occaſional occurrences, incidents, and circumſtances: as for inſtance, I am certain that I ought to pray to God; my conſcience is bound to this, becauſe there are moſt evident commands for it to be found in ſcripture, as well as to be derived from reaſon. I believe alſo that I may pray to God, either by a written form, or without one, becauſe neither reaſon nor revelation expreſsly requires either of theſe modes of prayer at all times, or forbids the other. I cannot therefore bind my conſcience to practiſe the one ſo as utterly to renounce the other; but I would

would practise either of them as my reason and other circumstances direct me.

Again, I believe that Christians ought to remember the death of Christ by the symbols of bread and wine: and I believe there ought to be pastors in a Christian church some way ordained or set apart to lead the worship, and to bless and distribute these elements; but the last of these practices is not so expressly directed, prescribed, and required in scripture as the former; and therefore I feel my conscience evidently bound to remember the death of Christ with some society of Christians or other, since it is a most plain command, though their methods of ordaining a pastor be very different from other men, or from my own opinion; or whether the person who distributes these elements be only an occasional or a settled administrator; since none of these things are plainly determined in scripture. I must not omit or neglect an express command, because some unnecessary circumstances are dubious. And I trust I shall receive approbation from the God of nature, and from Jesus my Judge at the last day, if I have endeavoured in this manner to believe and practise every thing in proportion to the degree of evidence which God has given me about it, or which he has put me into a capacity to seek and obtain in the age and nation wherein I live.

Query, Whether the obstinate Deists, and the Fatalists of Great Britain, will find sufficient apology from this principle? But I leave them to venture the awful experiment.

XXVI. We may observe these three rules, in judging of probabilities which are to be determined by reason, relating either to things past, or things to come.

1. That which agrees most with the constitution of nature carries the greatest probability in it, where no other circumstance appears to counterpoise it: as, if I let loose a greyhound within sight of a hare upon a large plain, there is great probability the greyhound will seize her; that a thousand sparrows will fly away at the sight of a hawk among them.

2. That which is most conformable to the constant observations of men, or to experiments frequently re-

peated, is moſt likely to be true: as, that a winter will not paſs away in England without ſome froſt and ſnow; that if you deal out great quantities of ſtrong liquor to the mob, there will be many drunk; that a large aſſembly of men will be of different opinions in any doubtful point; that a thief will make his eſcape out of priſon, if the doors of it are unguarded at midnight.

3. In matters of fact, which are paſt or preſent, which neither nature, nor obſervation, nor cuſtom, gives us any ſufficient information on either ſide of the queſtion, that we may derive a probability from the atteſtation of wiſe and honeſt men by word or writing, or the concurring witneſſes of multitudes who have ſeen and known what they relate, &c. This teſtimony in many caſes will ariſe to the degree of moral certainty. So we believe that the plant tea grows in China; and that the emperor of the Turks lives at Conſtantinople; that Julius Cæſar conquered France, and that Jeſus our Saviour lived and died in Judea; that thouſands were converted to the Chriſtian faith in a century after the death of Chriſt; and that the books which contain the Chriſtian religion are certain hiſtories and epiſtles which were written above a thouſand years ago. There is an infinite variety of ſuch propoſitions which can admit of no reaſonable doubt, though they are not matters which are directly evident to our own ſenſes, or our mere reaſoning powers.

XXVII. When a point hath been well examined, and our own judgment ſettled upon juſt arguments in our manly age, and after a large ſurvey of the merits of the cauſe, it would be a weakneſs for us always to continue fluttering in ſuſpenſe. We ought therefore to ſtand firm in ſuch well-eſtabliſhed principles, and not be tempted to change and alter for the ſake of every difficulty, or every occaſional objection. We are not to be carried about with every flying doctrine, like children toſſed to and fro, and wavering with the wind. It is a good thing to have the heart eſtabliſhed with grace, not with meats: that is, in the great doctrines of the goſpel of grace, and in Jeſus Chriſt, who is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever; but it is not ſo neceſſary in the more minute matters of religion, ſuch as meats and drinks,

drinks, forms and ceremonies, which are of leſs importance, and for which ſcripture has not given ſuch expreſs directions. This is the advice of the great Apoſtle, Eph. iv. 14. Heb. xiii. 8, 9.

In ſhort, thoſe truths which are the ſprings of daily practice ſhould be ſettled as ſoon as we can with the exerciſe of our beſt powers, after the ſtate of manhood: but thoſe things wherein we may poſſibly miſtake ſhould never be ſo abſolutely and finally eſtabliſhed and determined, as though we were infallible. If the Papiſts of Great Britain had indulged ſuch a reſolute eſtabliſhment and aſſurance in the days of king Henry the VIII. or queen Elizabeth, there never had been a reformation: nor would any Heathen have been converted even under the miniſtry of St Paul, if their obſtinate ſettlement in their idolatries had kept their eyes ſhut againſt all further light. Yet this ſhould not hinder us from ſettling our moſt important principles of faith and practice, where reaſon ſhines with its cleareſt evidence, and the word of God plainly determines truth and duty.

XXVIII. But let us remember alſo, that though the goſpel be an infallible revelation, we are but fallible interpreters, when we determine the ſenſe even of ſome important propoſitions written there; and therefore, though we ſeem to be eſtabliſhed in the belief of any particular ſenſe of ſcripture, and though there may be juſt calls of providence to profeſs and ſubſcribe it, yet there is no need that we ſhould reſolve or promiſe, ſubſcribe or ſwear, never to change our mind: ſince it is poſſible, in the nature and courſe of things, we may meet with ſuch a ſolid and ſubſtantial objection, as may give us a quite different view of things from what we once imagined, and may lay before us ſufficient evidence of the contrary. We may happen to find a fairer light caſt over the ſame ſcriptures, and ſee reaſon to alter our ſentiments even in ſome points of moment. *Sic ſentio ſic ſentiam*, i. e. So I believe, and ſo I will believe, is the priſon of the ſoul for lifetime, and a bar againſt all the improvements of the mind. To impoſe ſuch a profeſſion on other men in matters not abſolutely neceſſary, and not abſolutely certain, is a criminal

minal uſurpation and tyranny over faith and conſcience, and none has power to require it but an infallible dictator.

CHAP. XIX.

Of inquiring into CAUSES *and* EFFECTS.

SOME effects are found out by their cauſes, and ſome cauſes by their effects. Let us conſider both theſe.

1. WHEN we are inquiring into the cauſes of any particular effect or appearance, either in the world of nature, or in the civil or moral concerns of men, we may follow this method.

1. Conſider what effects or appearances you have known of a kindred nature, and what have been the certain and real cauſes of them; for like effects have generally like cauſes, eſpecially when they are found in the ſame ſort of ſubjects.

2. Conſider what are the ſeveral poſſible cauſes which may produce ſuch an effect: and find out by ſome circumſtances how many of thoſe poſſible cauſes are excluded in this particular caſe: thence proceed by degrees to the probable cauſes, till a more cloſe attention and inſpection ſhall exclude ſome of them alſo, and lead you gradually to the real and certain cauſe.

3. Conſider what things preceded ſuch an event or appearance, which might have any influence upon it; and though we cannot certainly determine the cauſe of any thing only from its going before the effect, yet among the many forerunners, we may probably light upon the true cauſe by further and more particular inquiry.

4. Conſider whether one cauſe be ſufficient to produce the effect, or whether it does not require a concurrence of ſeveral cauſes; and then endeavour as far as poſſible to adjuſt the degrees of influence that each cauſe might have in producing the effect, and the proper agency and intereſt of each of them therein.

So

So in natural philoſophy, if I would find what are the principles or cauſes of that ſenſation which we call heat when I ſtand near the fire; here I ſhall find it is neceſſary that there be an agency of the particles of fire on my fleſh, either mediately by themſelves, or at leaſt by the intermediate air; there muſt be a particular ſort of motion and vellication impreſt upon my nerves; there muſt be a derivation of that motion to the brain; and there muſt be an attention of my ſoul to this motion: if either of theſe are wanting, the ſenſation of heat will not be produced.

So in the moral world, if I inquire into the revolution of a ſtate or kingdom, perhaps I find it brought about by the tyranny or folly of a prince, or by the diſaffection of his own ſubjects; and this diſaffection and oppoſition may ariſe, either upon the account of impoſitions in religion, or injuries relating to their civil rights; or the revolution may be effected by the invaſion of a foreign army, or by the oppoſition of ſome perſon at home or abroad that lays claim to the government, &c. or a hero who would guard the liberties of the people; or by many of theſe concurring together; then we muſt adjuſt the influences of each as wiſely as we can, and not aſcribe the whole event to one of them alone.

II. When we are inquiring into the effects of any particular cauſe or cauſes, we may follow this method.

1. Conſider diligently the nature of every cauſe apart, and obſerve what effect every part or property of it will tend to produce.

2. Conſider the cauſes united together in their ſeveral natures, and ways of operation; inquire how far the powers or properties of one will hinder or promote the effects of the other, and wiſely balance the proportions of their influence.

3. Conſider what the ſubject is, in or upon which the cauſe is to operate; for the ſame cauſe on different ſubjects will oftentimes produce different effects, as the ſun which ſoftens wax, will harden clay.

4. Be frequent and diligent in making all proper experiments, in ſetting ſuch cauſes at work whoſe effects

you

you desire to know, and putting together in an orderly manner such things as are most likely to produce some useful effects, according to the best survey you can take of all the concurring causes and circumstances.

5. Observe carefully all the events which happen either by an occasional concurrence of various causes, or by the industrious application of knowing men: and when you see any happy effect certainly produced, and often repeated, treasure it up, together with the known causes of it, amongst your improvements.

6. Take a just survey of all the circumstances which attend the operation of any cause or causes, whereby any special effect is produced, and find out as far as possible how far any of those circumstances had a tendency either to obstruct or promote, or change those operations, and consequently how far the effect might be influenced by them.

In this manner physicians practise and improve their skill. They consider the various known effects of particular herbs or drugs, they meditate what will be the effect of their composition, and whether the virtues of the one will exalt or diminish the force of the other, or correct any of its innocent qualities. Then they observe the native constitution, and the present temper or circumstances of the patient, and what is likely to be the effect of such a medicine on such a patient. And in all uncommon cases they make wise and cautious experiments, and nicely observe the effects of particular compound medicines on different constitutions, and in different diseases: and by these treasuries of just observations, they grow up to an honourable degree of skill in the art of healing.

So the preacher considers the doctrines and reasons, the precepts, the promises, and threatenings of the word of God, and what are the natural effects of them upon the mind; he considers what is the natural tendency of such a virtue or such a vice; he is well apprized that the representation of some of these things may convince the understanding, some may terrify the conscience, some may allure the slothful, and some encourage the desponding mind; he observes the temper of his hearers, or of any particular person that converses with him about

about things ſacred, and he judges what will be the effects of each repreſentation on ſuch perſons; he reviews and recollects what have been the effects of ſome ſpecial parts and methods of his miniſtry; and by a careful ſurvey of all theſe, he attains greater degrees of ſkill in his ſacred employment.

Note, In all theſe caſes we muſt diſtinguiſh thoſe cauſes and effects which are naturally and neceſſarily connected with each other, from thoſe which have only an accidental or contingent connexion. Even in thoſe cauſes where the effect is but contingent, we may ſometimes arrive at a very high degree of probability; yet we cannot arrive at ſuch certainty as where the cauſes operate by an evident and natural neceſſity, and the effects neceſſarily follow the operation.

See more on this ſubject, Logic, Part II. Chap. V. Sect. 7. Of the principles and rules of judging concerning things paſt, preſent, and to come, by the mere uſe of reaſon.

CHAP. XX.

Of the Sciences, and their Uſe in particular Profeſſions.

I.

THE beſt way to learn any ſcience, is to begin with a regular ſyſtem, or a ſhort and plain ſcheme of that ſcience, well drawn up into a narrow compaſs, omitting the deeper and more abſtruſe parts of it, and that alſo under the conduct and inſtruction of ſome ſkilful teacher. Syſtems are neceſſary to give an entire and comprehenſive view of the ſeveral parts of any ſcience, which may have a mutual influence toward the explication or proof of each other: whereas if a man deals always and only in eſſays and diſcourſes on particular parts of a ſcience, he will never obtain a diſtinct and juſt idea of the whole, and may perhaps omit ſome important part of it, after ſeven years reading of ſuch occaſional diſcourſes.

For

For this reaſon, young ſtudents ſhould apply themſelves to their ſyſtems much more than pamphlets. That man is never ſo fit to judge of particular ſubjects relating to any ſcience, who has never taken a ſurvey of the whole.

It is the remark of an ingenious writer, ſhould a barbarous Indian, who had never ſeen a palace or a ſhip, view their ſeparate and disjointed part, and obſerve the pillars, doors, windows, cornices, and turrets of the one, or the prow and ſtern, the ribs and maſts, the ropes and ſhrouds, the ſails and tackle of the other, he would be able to form but a very lame and dark idea of either of thoſe excellent and uſeful inventions. In like manner, thoſe who contemplate only the fragments or pieces broken off from any ſcience, diſperſed in ſhort unconnected diſcourſes, and do not diſcern their relation to each other, and how they may be adapted, and by their union procure the delightful ſymmetry of a regular ſcheme, can never ſurvey an entire body of truth, but muſt always view it as deformed and diſmembered: while their ideas, which muſt be ever indiſtinct and often repugnant, will lie in the brain unſorted, and thrown together without order or coherence: ſuch is the knowledge of thoſe men who live upon the ſcraps of the ſciences.

A youth of genius and lively imagination, of an active and forward ſpirit, may form within himſelf ſome alluring ſcenes and pleaſing ſchemes in the beginning of a ſcience, which are utterly inconſiſtent with ſome of the neceſſary and ſubſtantial parts of it which appear in the middle or the end. And if he never read and paſs through the whole, he takes up and is ſatisfied with his own haſty pleaſing ſchemes, and treaſures theſe errors up amongſt his ſolid acquiſitions; whereas his own labour and ſtudy farther purſued would have ſhewn him his early miſtakes, and cured him of his ſelf-flattering deluſions.

Hence it comes to paſs, that we have ſo many half-ſcholars now-a-days, and there is ſo much confuſion and inconſiſtency in the notions and opinions of ſome perſons, becauſe they devote their hours of ſtudy entirely to ſhort eſſays and pamphets, and caſt contempt upon

upon ſyſtems, under a pretence of greater politeneſs; whereas the true reaſon of this contempt of ſyſtematical learning, is mere lazineſs and want of judgment.

II. After we are grown well acquainted with a ſhort ſyſtem or compendium of a ſcience, which is written in the plaineſt and moſt ſimple manner, it is then proper to read a larger regular treatiſe on that ſubject, if we deſign a complete knowledge and cultivation of it: and either while we are reading this larger ſyſtem, or after we have done it, the occaſional diſcourſes and eſſays upon the particular ſubjects and parts of that ſcience may be read with the greateſt profit: for in theſe eſſays we may often find very conſiderable corrections and improvements of what theſe compends, or even the larger ſyſtems may have taught us, mingled with ſome miſtakes.

And theſe corrections or improvements ſhould be as remarks adjoined by way of note or commentary in their proper places, and ſuperadded to the regular treatiſe we have read. Then a ſtudious and judicious review of the whole will give us a tolerable acquaintance with that ſcience.

III. It is a great happineſs to have ſuch a tutor, or ſuch friends and companions at hand, who are able to inform us what are the beſt books written on any ſcience, or any ſpecial part of it. For want of this advantage many a man has waſted his time in reading over perhaps ſome whole volumes, and learnt little more by it than to know that thoſe volumes were not worth his reading.

IV. As for the languages, they are certainly beſt learned in the younger years of life. The memory is then moſt empty and unfurniſhed, and ready to receive new ideas continually. We find that children, in two years time after they are born, learn to ſpeak their native tongue.

V. The more abſtracted ſciences, which depend more upon the underſtanding and judgment, and which deal much in abſtracted ideas, ſhould not be impoſed upon children too ſoon; ſuch are logic, metaphyſics, ethics, politics, or the depths and difficulties of grammar and criticiſm. Yet it muſt be confeſſed, the firſt rudiments

of grammar are neceſſary, or at leaſt very convenient to be known when a youth learns a new language; and ſome general eaſy principles and rules of morality and divinity are needful, in order to teach a child his duty to God and man; but to enter far into abſtracted reaſonings on theſe ſubjects is beyond the capacity of children.

VI. There are ſeveral of the ſciences that will more agreeably employ our younger years, and the general parts of them may be eaſily taken in by boys. The firſt principles and eaſier practices of arithmetic, geometry, plain trigonometry, meaſuring heights, depths, lengths, diſtances, &c. the rudiments of geography and aſtronomy, together with ſomething of mechanics, may be eaſily conveyed into the minds of acute young perſons from nine or ten years old and upward. Theſe ſtudies may be entertaining and uſeful to young ladies as well as to gentlemen, and to all thoſe who are bred up to the learned profeſſions. The fair ſex may intermingle thoſe with the operations of the needle, and the knowledge of domeſtic life. Boys may be taught to join them with their rudiments of grammar, and their labour in the languages. And even thoſe who never learn any language but their mother-tongue may be taught theſe ſciences with laſting benefit in early days.

That this may be done with eaſe and advantage, take theſe three reaſons.

(1.) Becauſe they depend ſo much upon ſchemes and numbers, images, lines, and figures, and ſenſible things, that the imagination or fancy will greatly aſſiſt the underſtanding, and render the knowledge of them much more eaſy.

(2.) Theſe ſtudies are ſo pleaſant, that they will make the dry labour of learning words, phraſes, and languages, more tolerable to boys in a Latin ſchool by this moſt agreeable mixture. The employment of youth in theſe ſtudies will tempt them to neglect many of the fooliſh plays of childhood, and they will find ſweeter entertainment for themſelves and their leiſure hours by a cultivation of theſe pretty pieces of alluring knowledge.

(3.)

(3.) The knowledge of theſe parts of ſcience are both eaſy and worthy to be retained in memory by all children when they come to manly years, for they are uſeful through all the parts of human life; they tend to enlarge the underſtanding early, and to give a various acquaintance with uſeful ſubjects by times. And ſurely it is beſt, as far as poſſible, to train up children in the knowledge of thoſe things which they ſhould never forget, rather than to let them waſte years of life in trifles, or in hard words which are not worth remembering.

And here by the way I cannot but wonder, that any author in our age ſhould have attempted to teach any of the exploded phyſics of Deſcartes, or the nobler inventions of Sir Iſaac Newton, in his hypotheſis of the heavenly bodies and their motions, in his doctrine of light and colours, and other parts of his phyſiology, or to inſtruct children in the knowledge of the theory of the heavens, earths, and planets, without any figures or diagrams. Is it poſſible to give a boy or a young lady the clear, diſtinct, and proper apprehenſions of theſe things, without lines and figures to deſcribe them? Does not their underſtanding want the aid of fancy and images to convey ſtronger and juſter ideas of them to the inmoſt ſoul? or do they imagine that youth can penetrate into all theſe beauties and artifices of nature without theſe helps which perſons of maturer age find neceſſary for that purpoſe? I would not willingly name the books, becauſe ſome of the writers are ſaid to be gentlemen of excellent acquirements.

VII. After we have firſt learnt and gone through any of thoſe arts or ſciences which are to be explained by diagrams, figures, and ſchemes, ſuch as geometry, geography, aſtronomy, optics, mechanics, &c. we may beſt preſerve them in memory, by having thoſe ſchemes and figures in large ſheets of paper hanging always before the eye in cloſets, parlours, halls, chambers, entries, ſtair-caſes, &c. Thus the learned images will be perpetually impreſt on the brain, and will keep the learning that depends upon them alive and freſh in the mind through the growing years of life: the mere diagrams and figures will ever recal to our thoughts thoſe theo-

rems, problems, and corollaries which have been demonſtrated by them.

It is incredible how much geography may be learnt this way by the two terreſtrial hemiſpheres, and by particular maps and charts of the coaſts and countries of the earth, happily diſpoſed round about us. Thus we may learn alſo the conſtellations, by juſt projections of the celeſtial ſphere, hung up in the ſame manner. And I muſt confeſs, for the bulk of learners of aſtronomy, I like that projection of the ſtars beſt which includes in it all the ſtars in our horizon, and therefore it reaches to the 38½ degree of ſouthern latitude, though its centre is the north-pole. This gives us a better view of the heavenly bodies as they appear every night to us, and it may be made uſe of with a little inſtruction, and with eaſe, to ſerve for a nocturnal, and ſhew the true hour of the night.

But remember, that if there be any colouring upon theſe maps or projections, it ſhould be laid on ſo thin as not to obſcure or conceal any part of the lines, figures, or letters: whereas moſt times they are daubed ſo thick with gay and glaring colours, and hung up ſo high above the reach of the eye that ſhould ſurvey and read them, as though their only deſign were to make a gaudy ſhow upon the wall, and they hung there merely to cover the naked plaſter or wainſcot.

Thoſe ſciences which may be drawn out into tables, may alſo be thus hung up and diſpoſed in proper places, ſuch as, brief abſtracts of hiſtory, chronology, &c. and indeed the ſchemes of any of the arts or ſciences may be analyſed in a ſort of ſkeleton, and repreſented upon tables, with the various dependencies and connexions of their ſeveral parts and ſubjects that belong to them. Mr Solomon Lowe has happily thrown the grammar of ſeveral languages into ſuch tables; and a frequent review of theſe abſtracts and epitomes would tend much to imprint them on the brain, when they have been once well learned; this would keep thoſe learned traces always open, and aſſiſt the weakneſs of a labouring memory. In this manner may a ſcheme of the ſcripture hiſtory be drawn out, and perpetuate thoſe ideas

ideas in the mind with which our daily reading furniſhes us.

VIII. EVERY man who pretends to the character of a ſcholar ſhould attain ſome general and ſuperficial idea of moſt or all the ſciences: for there is a certain connexion among the various parts of human knowledge, ſo that ſome notions borrowed from any one ſcience may aſſiſt our acquaintance with any other, either by way of explication, illuſtration, or proof: though there are ſome ſciences conjoined by a much nearer affinity than others.

IX. LET thoſe parts of every ſcience be chiefly ſtudied at firſt, and reviewed afterward, which have a more direct tendency to aſſiſt our proper profeſſion, as men, or our general profeſſion, as Chriſtians, always obſerving what we ourſelves have found moſt neceſſary and uſeful to us in the courſe of our lives. Age and experience will teach us to judge which of the ſciences, and which parts of them, have been of greateſt uſe, and are moſt valuable; but in younger years of life we are not ſufficient judges of this matter, and therefore ſhould ſeek advice from others who are elder.

X. THERE are three learned profeſſions among us, viz, divinity, law, and medicine. Though every man who pretends to be a ſcholar or a gentleman ſhould ſo far acquaint himſelf with a ſuperficial ſcheme of all the ſciences, as not to ſtand amazed like a mere ſtranger at the mention of the common ſubjects that belong to them; yet there is no neceſſity for every man of learning to enter into their difficulties and deep receſſes, nor to climb the heights to which ſome others have arrived. The knowledge of them in a proper meaſure may be happily uſeful to every profeſſion, not only becauſe all arts and ſciences have a ſort of communion and connexion with each other, but it is an angelic pleaſure to grow in knowledge, it is a matter of honour and eſteem, and renders a man more agreeable and acceptable in every company.

But let us ſurvey ſeveral of them more particularly, with regard to the learned profeſſions; and firſt of the mathematics.

XI. Though I have ſo often commended mathematical ſtudies, and particularly the ſpeculations of arithmetic and geometry, as a means to fix a wavering mind, to beget an habit of attention, and to improve the faculty of reaſon; yet I would by no means be underſtood to recommend to all a purſuit of theſe ſciences, to thoſe extenſive lengths to which the moderns have advanced them. This is neither neceſſary nor proper for any ſtudents, but thoſe few who ſhall make theſe ſtudies their chief profeſſion and buſineſs of life, or thoſe gentleman whoſe capacities and turn of mind are ſuited to theſe ſtudies, and have all manner of advantage to improve in them.

The general principles of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, of geography, of modern aſtronomy, mechanics, ſtatics, and optics, have their valuable and excellent uſes, not only for the exerciſe and improvement of the faculties of the mind, but the ſubjects themſelves are very well worth our knowledge in a moderate degree, and are often made of admirable ſervice in human life. So much of theſe ſubjects as Dr Wells has given us in his three volumes, entitled, The Young Gentleman's Mathematics, is richly ſufficient for the greateſt part of ſcholars or gentlemen; though perhaps there may be ſome ſingle treatiſes, at leaſt on ſome of theſe ſubjects, which may be better written and more uſeful to be peruſed than thoſe of that learned author.

But a penetration into the abſtruſe difficulties and depths of modern algebra and fluxions, the various methods of quadratures, the menſuration of all manner of curves, and their mutual transformation, and twenty other things that ſome modern mathematicians deal in, are not worth the labour of thoſe who deſign either of the three learned profeſſions, divinity, law, or phyſic, as the buſineſs of life. This is the ſentence of a conſiderable man, viz. Dr George Cheyne, who was a very good proficient and writer on theſe ſubjects: he affirms, that they are but barren and airy ſtudies for a man entirely to live upon, and that for a man to indulge and riot in theſe exquiſitely bewitching contemplations is only proper for public profeſſors, or for gentlemen of eſtates,

eſtates, who have a ſtrong propenſity this way, and a genius fit to cultvate them.

But, ſays he, to own a great but grievous truth, though they may quicken and ſharpen the invention, ſtrengthen and extend the imagination, improve and refine the reaſoning faculty, and are of uſe both in the neceſſary and the luxurious refinement of mechanical arts; yet having no tendency to rectify the will, to ſweeten the temper, or mend the heart, they often leave a ſtiffneſs, a poſitiveneſs and ſufficiency on weak minds, which is much more pernicious to ſociety, and to the intereſts of the great end of our being, than all their advantages can recompenſe. He adds further, concerning the launching into the depth of theſe ſtudies, that they are apt to beget a ſecret and refined pride, and over-weening and over-bearing vanity, the moſt oppoſite temper to the true ſpirit of the goſpel. This tempts them to preſume on a kind of omniſcience in reſpect to their fellow-creatures, who have not riſen to their elevation; nor are they fit to be truſted in the hands of any but thoſe who have acquired a humble heart, a lowly ſpirit, and a ſober and a teachable temper. See Dr Cheyne's preface to his Eſſay on Health and long Life.

XII. Some of the practical parts of geometry, aſtronomy, dialling, optics, ſtatics, mechanics, &c. may be agreeable entertainments and amuſements to ſtudents in every profeſſion at leiſure hours, if they enjoy ſuch circumſtances of life as to furniſh them with conveniences for this ſort of improvement: but let them take great care leſt they intrench upon more neceſſary employments, and ſo fall under the charge and cenſure of waſted time.

Yet I cannot help making this obſervation, that where ſtudents, or indeed any young gentlemen, have in their early years made themſelves maſters of a variety of elegant problems in the mathematic circle of knowledge, and gained the moſt eaſy, neat, and entertaining experiments in natural philoſophy, with ſome ſhort and agreeable ſpeculations or practices in any other of the arts or ſciences, they have hereby laid a foundation for the eſteem and love of mankind among thoſe with whom

whom they converſe, in higher or lower ranks of life; they have been often guarded by this means from the temptation of nocent pleaſures, and have ſecured both their own hours and the hours of their companions from running to waſte in ſauntering and trifles, and from a thouſand impertinencies in ſilly dialogues. Gaming and drinking, and many criminal and fooliſh ſcenes of talk and action, have been prevented by theſe innocent and improving elegancies of knowledge.

XIII. HISTORY is a neceſſary ſtudy in the ſupreme place for gentlemen who deal in politics. The government of nations, and diſtreſsful and defolating events which have in all ages attended the miſtakes of politicians, ſhould be ever preſent on their minds, to warn them to avoid the like conduct. Geography and chronology, which preciſely informs us of the place and time where ſuch tranſactions or events happened, are the eyes of hiſtory, and of abſolute neceſſity in ſome meaſure to attend it.

But hiſtory, ſo far as relates to the affairs of the Bible, is as neceſſary to divines as to gentlemen of any profeſſion. It helps us to reconcile many difficulties in ſcripture, and demonſtrates a divine providence. Dr Prideaux's connexion of the Old and New Teſtament is an excellent treatiſe of this kind.

XIV. AMONG the ſmaller hiſtories, biography, or the memoirs of the lives of great and good men, has a high rank in my eſteem, as worthy of the peruſal of every perſon who devotes himſelf to the ſtudy of divinity. Therein we frequently find our holy religion reduced to practice, and many parts of Chriſtianity ſhining with a tranſcendent and exemplary light. We learn there how deeply ſenſible great and good men have been of the ruins of human nature by the firſt apoſtacy from God, and how they have toiled and laboured, and turned themſelves on all ſides, to ſeek a recovery in vain, till they have found the goſpel of Chriſt an all-ſufficient relief. We are there furniſhed with effectual and unanſwerable evidences that the religion of Jeſus, with all its ſelf-denials, virtues, and devotions, is a very practicable thing, ſince it has been carried to ſuch a degree of honour by ſome wiſe and holy

holy men. We have been there aſſured, that the pleaſures and ſatisfactions of the Chriſtian life, in its preſent practice and its future hopes, are not the mere raptures of fancy and enthuſiaſm, when ſome of the ſtricteſt profeſſors of reaſon have added the ſanction of their teſtimony.

In ſhort, the lives or memoirs of perſons of piety, well written, have been of infinite and unſpeakable advantage to the diſciples and profeſſors of Chriſtianity, and have given us admirable inſtances and rules how to reſiſt every temptation of a ſoothing or a frowning world, how to practiſe important and difficult duties, how to love God above all, and to love our neighbours as ourſelves, to live by the faith of the Son of God, and to die in the ſame faith, in ſure and certain hope of a reſurrection to eternal life.

XV. Remember that logic and ontology or metaphyſics are neceſſary ſciences, though they have been greatly abuſed by ſcholaſtic writers who have profeſſed to teach them in former ages. Not only all ſtudents, whether they deſign the profeſſion of theology, law, or phyſic, but all gentlemen ſhould at leaſt acquire a ſuperficial knowledge of them. The introduction of ſo many ſubtilties, nice diſtinctions, and inſignificant terms, without clear ideas, has brought a great part of the logic and metaphyſics of the ſchools into juſt contempt. Their logic has appeared the mere art of wrangling, and their metaphyſics the ſkill of ſplitting an hair, of diſtinguiſhing without a difference, and of putting long hard names upon common things, and ſometimes upon a confuſed jumble of things which have no clear ideas belonging to them.

It is certain, that an unknown heap of trifles and impertinences have been intermingled with theſe uſeful parts of learning, upon which account many perſons in this polite age have made it a part of their breeding to throw a jeſt upon them; and to rally them well, has been eſteemed a more valuable talent than to underſtand them.

But this is running into wide extremes: nor ought theſe parts of ſcience to be abandoned by the wiſe, becauſe ſome writers of former ages have played the fool with

with them. True logic teaches us to uſe our reaſon well, and brings a light into the underſtanding: true metaphyſics or ontology caſts a light upon all the objects of thought and meditation, by ranging every being with all the abſolute and relative perfections and properties, modes, and attendants of it in proper ranks or claſſes, and thereby it diſcovers the various relations of things to each other, and what are their general or ſpecial differences from each other, wherein a great part of human knowledge conſiſts. And by this means it greatly conduces to inſtruck us in method, or the diſpoſition of every thing into its proper rank and claſs of beings, attributes, or actions.

XVI. If I were to ſay any thing of natural philoſophy, I would venture to lay down my ſentiments thus.

I think it muſt needs be very uſeful to a divine to underſtand ſomething of natural ſcience. The mere natural hiſtory of birds, beaſts, and fiſhes, of inſects, trees, and plants, as well as of meteors, ſuch as clouds, thunders, lightnings, ſnow, hail, froſt, &c. in all their common or uncommon appearances, may be of conſiderable uſe to one who ſtudies divinity, to give him a wider and more delightful view of the work of God, and to furniſh him with lively and happy images and metaphors drawn from the large volume of nature, to diſplay and repreſent the things of God and religion in the moſt beautiful and affecting colours.

And if the mere hiſtory of theſe things be uſeful for this purpoſe, ſurely it will be of further advantage to be led into the reaſons, cauſes, and effects of theſe natural objects and appearances, and to know the eſtabliſhed laws of nature, matter, and motion, whereby the great God carries on his extenſive works of providence from the creation to this day.

I confeſs the old Ariſtotelean ſcheme of this ſcience will teach us very little that is worth the knowing about theſe matters: but the later writers, who have explained nature and its operations in a more ſenſible and geometricial manner, are well worth the moderate ſtudy of a divine; eſpecially thoſe who have followed the principles of that wonder of our age and nation, Sir Iſaac Newton. There is much pleaſure and entertainment,

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as well as real profit, to be derived from thoſe admirable improvements which have been advanced in natural philoſophy in late years by the aſſiſtance of mathematical learning, as well as from the multitude of experiments which have been made, and are ſtill making, in natural ſubjects.

XVII. THIS is the ſcience which indeed eminently belongs to the phyſician: he ought to know all the parts of human nature, what are the ſound and healthy functions of an animal body, and what are the diſtempers and dangers which attend it; he ſhould alſo be furniſhed with a large knowledge of plants and minerals, and every thing which makes up the *materia medica*, or the ingredients of which medicines are made; and many other things in natural philoſophy are ſubſervient to his profeſſion, as well as to the kindred art of ſurgery.

XVIII. QUESTIONS about the powers and operations of nature may alſo ſometimes come into the lawyer's cognizance, eſpecially ſuch as relate to aſſaults, wounds, murders, &c. I remember I have read a trial of a man for murder by drowning, wherein the judge on the bench heard ſeveral arguments concerning the lungs being filled or not filled with water, by inſpiration or expiration, &c. to all which he profeſſed himſelf ſo much a ſtranger, as did not do him any great honour in public.

XIX. BUT I think no divine, who can obtain it, ſhould be utterly deſtitute of this knowledge. By the aſſiſtance of this ſtudy, he will be better able to ſurvey the various monuments of creating wiſdom in the heavens, the earth, and the ſeas, with wonder and worſhip: and by the uſe of a moderate ſkill in this ſcience, he may communicate ſo much of the aſtoniſhing works of God in the formation and government of this viſible world, and ſo far inſtruct many of his hearers, as may aſſiſt the tranſfuſion of the ſame ideas into their minds, and raiſe them to the ſame delightful exerciſes of devotion. O Lord, how manifold are thy works? In wiſdom haſt thou made them all! They are ſought out by all that have pleaſure in them.

Beſides,

Beſides, it is worthy of the notice of every ſtudent in theology, that he ought to have ſome acquaintance with the principles of nature, that he may judge a little how far they will go; ſo that he may not be impoſed upon to take every ſtrange appearance in nature for a miracle, that he may reaſon the clearer upon this ſubject, that he may better confirm the miracles of Moſes and of Chriſt, nor yield up his faith to any pretences of prodigy and wonder, which are either the occaſional and uncommon operations of the elements, or the crafty ſleights of men well ſkilled in philoſophy and mechanical operations to delude the ſimple.

XX. The knowledge alſo of animal nature, and of the rational ſoul of man, and the mutual influence of theſe two ingredients of our compoſition upon each other, is worthy the ſtudy of a divine. It is of great importance to perſons of this character and office, to judge how far the animal powers have influence upon ſuch and ſuch particular appearances and practices of mankind; how far the appetites or paſſions of human nature are owing to the fleſh and blood, or to the mind; how far they may be moderated, and how far they ought to be ſubdued; and what are the happieſt methods of obtaining theſe ends. By this ſcience alſo we may be better informed how far theſe paſſions or appetites are lawful, and how far they are criminal, by conſidering how far they are ſubject to the power of the will, and how far they may be changed and corrected by our watchfulneſs, care, and diligence.

It comes alſo very properly under the cognizance of this profeſſion, to be able in ſome meaſure to determine queſtions which may ariſe relating to real inſpiration or prophecy, to wild enthuſiaſm, to fits of a convulſive kind, to melancholy or phrenzy, &c. and what directions are proper to be given concerning any appearances of this nature.

XXI. Next to the knowledge of natural things, and acquaintance with the human nature and conſtitution, which is made up of ſoul and body, I think natural religion properly takes its place. This conſiſts of theſe two parts, viz. (1.) The ſpeculative or contemplative, which is the knowledge of God in his various perfec-

tions, and in his relations to his rational creatures, ſo far as may be known by the light of nature, which heretofore uſed to be called the ſecond part of metaphyſics. It includes alſo (2.) That which is practical or active, which is the knowledge of the ſeveral duties which ariſe from our relation to God, and our relation to our fellow-creatures, and the proper conduct and government of ourſelves; this has been uſed to be called ethics, or moral philoſophy.

XXII. The knowledge of theſe things is proper for all men of learning; not only becauſe it teaches them to obtain juſter views of the ſeveral parts of revealed religion and of Chriſtianity, which are built upon them, but becauſe every branch of natural religion and of moral duty is contained, and neceſſarily implied, in all the revealed religions that ever God preſcribed to the world. We may well ſuſpect that religion does not come from God which renounces any part of natural duty.

Whether mankind live under the diſpenſation of the patriarchs, or of Moſes, or the prophets, or of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſtill we are bound to know the one true God, and to practiſe all that adoration and reverence, all that love to him, that faith in his perfections, with that obedience and ſubmiſſion to his will, which natural religion requires. We are ſtill bound to exerciſe that juſtice, truth, and goodneſs towards our neighbours, that reſtraint and moderation of our own appetites and paſſions, and that regular behaviour towards ourſelves and all our fellow-creatures around us, which moral philoſophy teaches. There is no ſort of revealed religion that will diſpenſe with theſe natural obligations: and a happy acquaintance with the ſeveral appetites, inclinations, and paſſions of human nature, and the beſt methods to rule and reſtrain, to direct and govern them, are our conſtant buſineſs, and ought to be our everlaſting ſtudy.

Yet I would lay down this caution, viz. That ſince ſtudents are inſtructed in the knowledge of the true God in their lectures on Chriſtianity, and ſince among the Chriſtian duties they are alſo taught all the moral dictates of the light of nature, or a complete ſcheme of ethics, there is no abſolute neceſſity of learning theſe

two parts of natural religion, as diſtinct ſciences, ſeparate and by themſelves: but ſtill it is of great importance for a tutor, while he is reading to his pupils theſe parts of the Chriſtian religion, to give them notice how far the light of nature or mere reaſon will inſtruct us in theſe doctrines and duties, and how far we are obliged to divine revelation and ſcripture, for clearing up and eſtabliſhing the firm foundations of the one, for affording us ſuperior motives and powers to practiſe the other, for raiſing them to more exalted degrees, and building ſo glorious a ſuperſtructure upon them.

XXIII. The ſtudy of natural religion, viz. the knowledge of God and the rules of virtue and piety, as far as they are diſcovered by the light of nature, is needful indeed to prove the truth of divine revelation or ſcripture, in the moſt effectual manner: but after the divine authority of ſcripture is eſtabliſhed, that will be a very ſufficient ſpring from whence the bulk of mankind may derive their knowledge of divinity, or the Chriſtian religion, in order to their own preſent faith and practice, and their future and eternal happineſs. In this ſenſe theology is a ſcience neceſſary for every one that hopes for the favour of God, and the felicity of another world; and it is of infinitely more importance than any of the arts and ſciences which belong to the learned profeſſions here on earth.

XXIV. Perhaps it will be thought neceſſary I ſhould ſay ſomething concerning the ſtudy of the civil law, or the law of nature and nations.

If we would ſpeak with great juſtneſs and propriety, the civil law ſignifies the peculiar law of each ſtate, country, or city: but what we now-a-days uſually mean by the civil law, is a body of laws compoſed out of the beſt of the Roman and Grecian laws, and which was in the main received and obſerved through all the Roman dominions for above twelve hundred years.

The Romans took the firſt grounds of this law from what they call the twelve tables, which were the abridgments of the laws of Solon at Athens, and of other cities in Greece, famous for knowledge and wiſdom; to which they added their own ancient cuſtoms of the city of Rome, and the laws which were made there.

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Theſe written laws were ſubject to various interpretations, whence controverſies daily ariſing, they were determined by the judgment of the learned; and theſe determinations were what they firſt called Jus Civile. All this by degrees grew to a vaſt number of volumes; and therefore the emperor Juſtinian commanded his chancellor Tribonian to reduce them to a perfect body, and this is called the body of the civil law.

XXV. But that which is of moſt importance for all learned men to be acquainted with is the law of nature, or the knowledge of right and wrong among mankind, whether it be tranſacted between ſingle perſons or communities, ſo far as common reaſon and the light of nature dictate and direct. This is what Puffendorff calls the law of nature and nations, as will appear if you conſult Sect. 3. Chap. III. of the moſt valuable folio he has written on that ſubject; which is well worthy the ſtudy of every man of learning, particularly lawyers and divines, together with other treatiſes on the ſame theme.

If any queſtion propoſed relate to right, and property, and juſtice between man and man, in any polite and civilized country, though it muſt be adjudged chiefly according to the particular ſtatutes and laws of that country, yet the knowledge of the law of nature will very conſiderably aſſiſt the lawyer and the civil judge in the determination thereof. And this knowledge will be of great uſe to divines, not only in deciding of caſes of conſcience among men, and anſwering any difficult inquiries which may be propoſed to them on this ſubject, but it will greatly aſſiſt them alſo in their ſtudies relating to the law of God, and the performance or violation thereof, the nature of duty and ſin, reward and puniſhment.

XXVI. I have ſpoken ſomething of the languages before, but let me here reſume the ſubject, and put in a few thoughts about thoſe ſtudies which are wont to be called philological; ſuch as hiſtory, languages, grammar, rhetoric, poeſy, and criticiſm.

An acquaintance with ſome of the learned languages at leaſt is neceſſary for all the three learned profeſſions.

XXVII. The lawyers, who have the leaſt need of foreign tongues, ought to underſtand Latin. During many ages paſt, very important matters in the law were always written and managed in that language by the lawyers, as preſcriptions in medicine by the phyſicians, and citations of the ſcriptures in divinity were always made in Latin by the divines. Prayers alſo were ordained to be ſaid publicly and privately in the Roman tongue: *pater-noſters* and *ave-marias* were half the devotion of thoſe ages. Theſe cruel impoſitions upon the people would not ſuffer them to read in their own mother-tongue what was done, either to or for their own ſouls, their bodies or their eſtates. I am ready to ſuſpect this was all owing to the craft and policy of the prieſthood and church of Rome, which endeavoured to aggrandize themſelves, and exalt their own profeſſion into a ſovereign tyranny, and to make mere ſlaves of the laity among mankind, by keeping them in utter ignorance, darkneſs and dependence. And they were willing to compound the matter with the phyſicians and the lawyers, and allow them a ſmall ſhare in this tyranny over the populace, to maintain their own ſupreme dominion over all.

But we thank God the world is grown ſomething wiſer; and of late years the Britiſh Parliament has been pleaſed to give relief from that bondage in matters relating to the law alſo, as in the age of the Reformation we were delivered from ſaying our prayers in Latin, from being bound to read the word of God in a tongue unknown to the people, and from living in an everlaſting ſubjection to the clergy in matters of this life, and the life to come.

But to return: There are ſtill ſo many forms of proceedings in judicature, and things called by Latin names in the profeſſion of the law, and ſo many barbarous words with Latin terminations, that it is neceſſary lawyers ſhould underſtand this language. Some acquaintance alſo with the old French tongue is needful for the ſame perſons and profeſſion, ſince the tenures of Lyttleton, which are a ſort of Bible to the gentlemen of the long robe, were written in that language: and this tongue has been interwoven in ſome forms of the

the Engliſh law, from the days of William the conqueror, who came from Normandy in France.

XXVIII. PHYSICIANS ſhould be ſkilled in the Greek as well as in the Latin, becauſe their great maſter Hippocrates wrote in that tongue, and his writings are ſtill of good value and uſe. A multitude of the names, both of the parts of the body, of diſeaſes, and of medicines, are derived from the Greek language: and there are many excellent books of phyſic, both in the theoretical and practical parts of it, which are delivered to the world in the Roman tongue, and of which that profeſſion ſhould not be ignorant.

XXIX. SUCH as intend the ſtudy of theology ſhould be well acquainted alſo with the Latin, becauſe it has been for many hundred years the language of the ſchools of learning: their diſputations are generally limited to that language, and many and excellent books of divinity muſt be entirely concealed from the ſtudents, unleſs they are acquainted with Latin authors.

But thoſe that deſign the ſacred profeſſion of theology ſhould make it their labour of chief importance to be very converſant with their Bibles, both in the Old and New Teſtament: and this requires ſome knowledge of thoſe original languages, Greek and Hebrew, in which the Scriptures were written. All that will purſue theſe ſtudies with honour ſhould be able to read the Old Teſtament tolerably in the Hebrew tongue: at leaſt they ſhould be ſo far acquainted with it, as to find out the ſenſe of a text by the help of a dictionary. But ſcarce any man ſhould be thought worthy of the name of a ſolid divine, or a ſkilful teacher of the goſpel in theſe days of light and liberty, unleſs he has pretty good knowledge of the Greek, ſince all the important points of the Chriſtian religion are derived from the New Teſtament, which was firſt written in that language.

XXX. As for the Syriac and Arabic tongues, if one divine in thirty, or in three hundred, travel far into theſe regions, it is enough. A few learned men ſkilled in theſe languages will make ſufficient remarks upon them for the ſervice of the whole Chriſtian world; which remarks may ſometimes happen to be of uſe to

thoſe divines who are unacquainted with them, in reading the Bible. But the advantage of theſe tongues is not of ſo great importance as it has been too often repreſented. My reader will agree with me, when he conſiders that the chief uſes of them are theſe.

The Arabic is a language which has ſome kindred and affinity to the Hebrew, and perhaps we may now and then gueſs at the ſenſe of ſome uncommon and doubtful Hebrew word, which is found but once or twice in the Bible, by its ſuppoſed affinity to the Arabic: but whatſoever conjectures may be made by ſome kindred of a Hebrew word to an Arabic root, yet there is no certainty to be gathered from it: for even words of the ſame language, which are undoubtedly derived from the ſame theme or primitive, will give us but very doubtful and ſorry information concerning the true ſenſe of kindred words which ſpring from the ſame theme.

Let me give a plain inſtance or two of this uncertainty. The word *ſtrages* ſignifies *ſlaughter*; *ſtratum* is *Latin* for a *bed*; *ſtramen* is *ſtraw*; and *ſtragulum* is a *quilt* or coverlet: they are all drawn and derived from *ſterno*, which ſignifies to *throw down*, to *kill*, or to *ſpread abroad*. Let the critics tell me what certain ſenſe they could put upon either of theſe four words by their mere cognation with each other, or their derivation from one common verb. Again, who could tell me the certain meaning and preciſe idea of the word *honeſt* in Engliſh, and aſſure me that it ſignifies a man of integrity, juſtice and probity, though it is evidently derived from honeſtus in Latin? Whereas honeſtus hath a very different idea, and ſignifies a man of ſome figure in the world, or a man of honour. Let any man judge then how little ſervice toward explaining the Hebrew tongue can be furniſhed from all the language of Arabia. Surely a great part of the long learned fatigues and tireſome travels of men through this country is almoſt vain and uſeleſs to make the Hebrew Bible better underſtood.

As for the Syriac language, it is granted there may be ſome ſmall advantage drawn from the knowledge of it,

it, becauſe there is a very ancient tranſlation of the New Teſtament in that tongue: and perhaps this may ſometimes give a proper and appoſite meaning to a difficult and doubtful text, and offer a fair hint for recovering the true meaning of the Scripture from the perverſe gloſſes of other writers. But there are ſeveral commentators and lexicographers who have been acquainted with the Syriac language, and have given us the chief of theſe hints in their writings on Scripture.

And after all, ſince none of theſe aſſiſtances can yield us a ſufficient proof of a true interpretation, and give us the certain ſenſe of a text, who would be perſuaded to waſte any great number of his better hours in ſuch dry ſtudies, and in labours of ſo little profit?

XXXI. The Chaldean language indeed is much nearer to the Hebrew, and it is proper for a divine to have ſome acquaintance with it, becauſe there are ſeveral verſes or chapters of Ezra and Daniel which are written in that language: and the old Jewiſh targums or commentaries, which are written in the Chaldean tongue, may ſometimes happen to caſt a little light upon a doubtful ſcripture of the Old Teſtament.

But it muſt be ſtill owned, that the knowledge of theſe Eaſtern tongues does not deſerve to be magnified to ſuch a degree as ſome of the proficients in them have indulged; wherein they have carried matters beyond all reaſon and juſtice, ſince ſcarce any of the moſt important ſubjects of the goſpel of Chriſt and the way of ſalvation can gain any advantage from them.

XXXII. The art of grammar comes now to be mentioned. It is a diſtinct thing from the mere knowledge of the languages; for all mankind are taught from their infancy to ſpeak their mother-tongue, by a natural imitation of their mothers and nurſes, and thoſe who are round about them, without any knowledge of the art of grammar, and the various obſervations and rules that relate to it. Grammar indeed is nothing elſe but rules and obſervations drawn from the common ſpeech of mankind in their ſeveral languages; and it teaches us to ſpeak and pronounce, to ſpell and write with propriety and exactneſs, according to the cuſtom of thoſe in every nation who are or were ſuppoſed to ſpeak

ſpeak and write their own language beſt. Now it is a ſhame for a man to pretend to ſcience and ſtudy in any of the three learned profeſſions, who is not in ſome meaſure acquainted with the propriety of thoſe languages with which he ought to be converſant in his daily ſtudies, and more eſpecially in ſuch as he may ſometimes be called upon to write as well as read.

XXXIII. Next to grammar, we proceed to conſider rhetoric.

Now rhetoric in general is the art of perſuading, which may be diſtinguiſhed into theſe three parts; viz. (1.) Conveying the ſenſe of the ſpeaker to the underſtanding of the hearers in the cleareſt and moſt intelligible manner, by the plaineſt expreſſions, and the moſt lively and ſtriking repreſentations of it, ſo that the mind may be thoroughly convinced of the thing propoſed. (2.) Perſuading the will effectually to chuſe or refuſe the thing ſuggeſted and repreſented. (3.) Raiſing the paſſions in the moſt vivid and forcible manner, ſo as to ſet all the ſoul and every power of nature at work, to purſue or avoid the thing in debate.

To attain this end, there is not only a great deal of art neceſſary in the repreſentation of matters to the auditory, but alſo in the diſpoſition or method of introducing theſe particular repreſentations, together with the reaſons which might convince, and the various methods which might perſuade and prevail upon the hearers. There are certain ſeaſons wherein a violent torrent of oration, in a diſguiſed and concealed method, may be more effectual than all the nice forms of logic and reaſoning. The figures of interrogation and exclamation have ſometimes a large place and happy effect in this ſort of diſcourſe, and no figure of ſpeech ſhould be wanting here where the ſpeaker has art enough happily to introduce it.

There are many remarks and rules laid down by the teachers of this art to improve a young genius into thoſe glorious talents whereby Tully and Demoſthenes acquired that amazing influence and ſucceſs in their own age and nation, and that immortal fame through all nations and ages. And it is with great advantage theſe rules may be peruſed and learned. But a happy genius,

genius, a lively imagination, and warm paſſions, together with a due degree of knowledge and ſkill in the ſubject to be debated, and a perpetual peruſal of the writings of the beſt orators, and hearing the beſt ſpeakers, will do more to make an orator, than all the rules of art in the world, without theſe natural talents, and this careful imitation of the moſt approved and happieſt orators.

XXXIV. Now you will preſently ſuppoſe that pleaders at the bar have great need of this art of rhetoric; but it has been a juſt doubt, whether pleading in our Britiſh courts of juſtice, before a ſkilful judge, ſhould admit of any other aid from rhetoric, than that which teaches to open a cauſe clearly, and ſpread it in the moſt perſpicuous, complete, and impartial manner before the eyes of him that judges: for impartial juſtice being the thing which is ſought, there ſhould be no artifices uſed, no eloquence or powers of language employed to perſuade the will, or work upon the paſſions, leſt the deciſive ſentence of the judge ſhould be biaſſed or warped into injuſtice. For this reaſon, Mr Locke would baniſh all pleaders in the law for fees out of his government of Carolina, in his poſthumous works, though perhaps that great man might poſſibly be too ſevere in ſo univerſal a cenſure of the profeſſion.

XXXV. But the caſe is very different with regard to divines: the eloquence of the pulpit, beyond all controverſy, has a much larger extent.

Their buſineſs is not to plead a cauſe of right and wrong before a wiſe and ſkilful judge, but to addreſs all the ranks of mankind, the high and low, the wiſe and the unwiſe, the ſober and the vicious, and perſuade them all to purſue and perſevere in virtue with regard to themſelves, in juſtice and goodneſs with regard to their neighbours, and piety towards God. Theſe are affairs of everlaſting importance, and moſt of the perſons to whom theſe addreſſes are made are not wiſe and ſkilful judges, but are influenced and drawn ſtrongly to the contrary ſide by their own ſinful appetites and paſſions, and bribed or biaſſed by the corrupt cuſtoms of the world.

There

There is therefore a neceſſity not only of a clear and faithful repreſentation of things to men, in order to convince their reaſon and judgment, but of all the ſkill and force of perſuaſion addreſſed to the will and the paſſions. So Tully addreſſed the whole ſenate of Rome, and Demoſthenes the Athenian people, among whom were capacities and inclinations of infinite variety; and therefore they made uſe of all the lightning and thunder, all the entreaties and terrors, all the ſoothing elegancies and the flowery beauties of language which their art could furniſh them with. Divines in the pulpit have much the ſame ſort of hearers, and therefore they ſhould imitate thoſe ancient examples. The underſtanding indeed ought to be firſt convinced by the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt force of reaſoning; but when this is done, all the powerful motives ſhould be uſed, which have any juſt influence upon human nature, all the ſprings of paſſion ſhould be touched, to awaken the ſtupid and the thoughtleſs into conſideration, to penetrate and melt the hardeſt heart, to perſuade the unwilling, to excite the lazy, to reclaim the obſtinate, and reform the vicious part of mankind, as well as to encourage thoſe who are humble and pious, and to ſupport their practice and their hope. The tribes of men are ſunk into ſo fatal a degeneracy and dreadful diſtance from God, and from all that is holy and happy, that all the eloquence which a preacher is maſter of ſhould be employed in order to recover the world from its ſhameful ruin and wretchedneſs by the goſpel of our bleſſed Saviour, and reſtore it to virtue and piety, to God and happineſs, by the divine power of this goſpel. O may ſuch glorious maſters of ſacred oratory never be wanting in the pulpits of Great Britain!

XXXVI. Shall I now ſpeak ſomething of my ſentiments concerning poeſy?

As for books of poeſy, whether in the learned or in the modern languages, they are of great uſe to be read at hours of leiſure by all perſons that make any pretence to good education or learning; and that for ſeveral reaſons.

I.

1. Becauſe there are many couplets or ſtanzas written in poetic meaſures which contain a variety of morals or rules of practice relating to the common prudentials of mankind, as well as to matters of religion, and the poetic numbers (or rhyme, if there be any) add very conſiderable force to the memory.

Beſides, many an elegant and admirable ſentiment or deſcription of things which are found among the poets are well worth committing to memory, and the particular meaſures of verſe greatly aſſiſt us in recollecting ſuch excellent paſſages, which might ſometimes raiſe our converſation from low and grovelling ſubjects.

2. In heroic verſe, but eſpecially in the grander lyrics, there are ſometimes ſuch noble elevations of thought and paſſion as illuminate all things around us, and convey to the ſoul moſt exalted and magnificent images and ſublime ſentiments: theſe furniſh us with glorious ſprings and mediums to raiſe and aggrandize our conceptions, to warm our ſouls, to awaken the better paſſions, and to elevate them even to a divine pitch, and that for devotional purpoſes. It is the lyric ode which has ſhewn to the world ſome of the happieſt examples of this kind, and I cannot ſay but this part of poeſy has been my favourite amuſement above all others.

And for this reaſon it is that I have never thought the heroic poems, Greek, Latin, or Engliſh, which have obtained the higheſt fame in the world, are ſufficiently diverſified, exalted, or animated, for want of the interſperſion of now and then an elegiac or a lyric ode. This might have been done with great and beautiful propriety, where the poet has introduced a ſong at a feaſt, or the joys of a victory, or the ſoliloquies of divine ſatisfaction, or the penſive and deſpairing agonies of diſtreſſing ſorrow. Why ſhould that which is called the moſt glorious form of poeſy be bound down and confined to ſuch a long and endleſs uniformity of meaſures, when it ſhould kindle or melt the ſoul, ſwell or ſink it into all the various and tranſporting changes of which human nature is capable?

Cowley, in his unfiniſhed fragment of the Davideis, has ſhewn us this way to improvement: and whatever

whatever blemiſhes may be found in other parts of that heroic eſſay, this beauty and glory of it ought to be preſerved for imitation. I am well aſſured that if Homer and Virgil had happened to practiſe it, it would have been renowned and glorified by every critic. I am greatly miſtaken, if this wiſe mixture of numbers would not be a further reach of perfection than they have ever attained to without it: let it be remembered, that it is not nature and ſtrict reaſon, but a weak and awful reverence for antiquity and the vogue of fallible men, that has eſtabliſhed thoſe Greek and Roman writings as abſolute and complete patterns. In ſeveral ages there have been ſome men of learning who have very juſtly diſputed this glory, and have pointed to many of their miſtakes.

3. But ſtill there is another end of reading poeſy, and perhaps the moſt conſiderable advantage to be obtained from it by the bulk of mankind, and that is, to furniſh our tongues with the richeſt and the moſt polite variety of phraſes and words upon all occaſions of life or religion. He that writes well in verſe will often find a neceſſity to ſend his thoughts in ſearch through all the treaſure of words that expreſs any one idea in the ſame language, that ſo he may comport with the meaſures, or the rhyme of the verſe which he writes, or with his own moſt beautiful and vivid ſentiments of the thing he deſcribes. Now by much reading of this kind, we ſhall inſenſibly acquire the habit and ſkill of diverſifying our phraſes upon all occaſions, and of expreſſing our ideas in the moſt proper and beautiful language, whether we write or ſpeak of the things of God or men.

It is pity that ſome of theſe harmonious writers have ever indulged any thing uncleanly or impure to defile their paper and abuſe the ears of their readers, or to offend againſt the rules of the niceſt virtue and politeneſs: but ſtill amonſt the writings of Mr Dryden, and Mr Pope, and Dr Young, as well as others, there is a ſufficient choice in our own language, wherein we ſhall not find any indecency to ſhock the moſt modeſt tongue or ear.

Perhaps

Perhaps there has hardly been a writer in any nation, and I may dare to affirm, there is none in ours, has a richer and happier talent of painting to the life, or has ever diſcovered ſuch a large and inexhauſted variety of deſcription, as the celebrated Mr Pope. If you read his tranſlation of Homer's Iliad, you will find almoſt all the terms or phraſes in our tongue that are needful to expreſs any thing that is grand or magnificent: but if you peruſe his Odyſſee, which deſcends much more into common life, there is ſcarce any uſeful ſubject of diſcourſe or thought, or any ordinary occurrence which he has not cultivated and dreſſed in the moſt proper language; and yet ſtill he has ennobled and enlivened even the lower ſubjects with the brighteſt and moſt agreeable ornaments.

I ſhould add here alſo, that if the ſame author had more frequently employed his pen on divine themes, his ſhort poem on the Meſſiah, and ſome part of his letters between Abelard and Eloiſa, with that ode on the dying Chriſtian, &c. ſufficiently aſſure us, that his pen would have honourably imitated ſome of the tender ſcenes of penitential ſorrow, as well as the ſublimer odes of the Hebrew Pſalmiſt, and perhaps diſcovered to us in a better manner than any other tranſlation has done, how great a poet ſat upon the throne of Iſrael.

4. After all that I have ſaid, there is yet a further uſe of reading poeſy, and that is, when the mind has been fatigued with ſtudies of a more laborious kind, or when it is any ways unfit for the purſuit of more difficult ſubjects, it may be as it were unbent, and repoſe itſelf a while on the flowery meadows where the muſes dwell. It is a very ſenſible relief to the ſoul, when it is over-tired, to amuſe itſelf with the numbers and the beautiful ſentiments of the poets, and in a little time this agreeable amuſement may recover the languid ſpirits to activity and more important ſervice.

XXXVII. ALL this I propoſe to the world as my beſt obſervations about reading of verſe. But if the queſtion were offered to me, ſhall a ſtudent of a bright genius never divert himſelf with writing poeſy? I would anſwer, Yes, when he cannot poſſibly help it: a lower

genius in mature years would heartily wish that he had spent much more time in reading the best authors of this kind, and employed much fewer hours in writing. But it must be confessed, or supposed at least, that there may be seasons when it is hardly possible for a poetic soul to restrain the fancy, or quench the flame, when it is hard to suppress the exuberant flow of lofty sentiments, and prevent the imagination from this sort of style or language: and that is the only reason, I think, wherein this inclination should be indulged; especially by persons who have devoted themselves to professions of a different kind: and one reason is, because what they write in that hour is more likely to carry in it some appearance above nature, some happy imitation of the dictates of the muse *.

XXXVIII. There are other things besides history, grammar, and languages, rhetoric and poesy, which have been included under the name of philological knowledge; such as, an acquaintance with the notions, customs, manners, tempers, polity, &c. of the various nations of the earth, or the distinct sects and tribes of mankind. This is necessary in order to understand history the better; and every man who is a lawyer or a gentleman, ought to obtain some acquaintance with these things, without which he can never read history to any great advantage, nor can he maintain his own station and character in life with honour and dignity without some insight into them.

XXXIX. Students in divinity ought to seek a larger acquaintance with the Jewish laws, polity, customs, &c. in order to understand many passages of the Old Testament and the New, and to vindicate the sacred writers from the reproaches of Infidels. An acquaintance also with many of the Roman and Grecian affairs is needful to explain several texts of scripture in the New Testament, to lead sincere inquirers into the true and genuine sense of the evangelists and apostles, and

* The muse in the ancient Heathen sense is supposed to be a goddess; but in the philosophic sense it can mean no more, than a bright genius, with a warm and strong imagination, elevated to an uncommon degree.

and to guard their writings from the unreasonable cavils of men.

XL. The art of criticism is reckoned by some as a distinct part of philology; but it is in truth nothing else than a more exact and accurate knowledge or skill in the other parts of it, and a readiness to apply that knowledge upon all occasions, in order to judge well of what relates to these subjects, to explain what is obscure in the authors which we read, to supply what is defective, and amend what is erroneous in manuscripts or ancient copies, to correct the mistakes of authors and editors in the sense or the words, to reconcile the controversies of the learned, and by this means to spread a juster knowledge of these things among the inquisitive part of mankind.

Every man who pretends to the learned professions, if he doth not arise to be a critic himself in philological matters, he should be frequently conversing with those books, whether dictionaries, paraphrasts, commentators, or other critics, which may relieve any difficulties he meets with, and give him a more exact acquaintance with those studies which he pursues.

And whensoever any person is arrived to such a degree of knowledge in these things as to furnish him well for the practice of criticism, let him take great care that pride and vanity, contempt of others, with inward wrath and insolence, do not mingle themselves with his remarks and censures. Let him remember the common frailties of human nature, and the mistakes to which the wisest man is sometimes liable, that he may practise this art with due modesty and candour.

THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

PART SECOND.

CONTAINING

VARIOUS REMARKS AND RULES

ABOUT THE

Communication of Useful Knowledge.

PREFACE.

THE author's name, which is prefixed to this book, renders it altogether needleſs for us to ſay any thing in order to recommend it: and we need not aſſure any judicious reader, who has been converſant with Dr Watts's writings, that this is the genuine work of that excellent author; for he cannot fail of diſcerning the doctor's eaſy ſtile, and beautiful manner of expreſſion in every page. We eſteem it an honour done us by that truly great man, that he was pleaſed, by his laſt will, to entruſt us with his manuſcripts which he deſigned for the preſs; however, he lived to publiſh ſeveral of thoſe himſelf, after his will was made, ſo that not many remain to be publiſhed by us. Some indeed there are remaining, which he did originally intend for the preſs, but his broken ſtate of health did not permit him to finiſh them, and they are left too imperfect to be ever publiſhed. Of this ſort, among others, is the larger diſcourſe on pſalmody, which he gave notice of his intention to publiſh in the preface to the ſecond edition of his Hymns, when he withdrew the ſhorter Eſſay on that ſubject, which was annexed to the firſt edition. There are alſo among his manuſcripts ſome tracts relating to a doctrinal controverſy, which the doctor had been engaged in, but which the world ſeems to be tired of: ſo that, moſt probably, this ſecond part of the Improvement of the Mind, with the Diſcourſe on Education, and ſome additions to the Reliquiæ Juveniles, are all the poſthumous works of Dr Watts that will ever be printed

As to this work in particular, a conſiderable part of it was corrected for the preſs by the doctor's own hand; and as to the reſt of it, he did not leave it ſo far unfiniſhed as ſhould, in his own judgment, diſcourage the publiſhing it; for he has left this note in a paper along with it, "Though this book, or the ſecond volume of "the Improvement of the Mind, is not ſo far finiſhed as "I could wiſh, yet I leave it among the number of "books

" books corrected for the preſs; for it is very eaſy for " any perſon of genius and ſcience to finiſh it, and " publiſh it in a form ſufficiently uſeful to the world." The corrections we have preſumed to make are comparatively but few and trivial; and when, now and then, it was thought needful to add a line or two for the illuſtration of any paſſage, it is generally put in the form of a note at the foot of the page.

It may perhaps be expected we ſhould make ſome apology for delaying the publiſhing of this book ſo long after the author's death; a book that has been ſo much expected and ſo earneſtly deſired, as appears by ſeveral letters found in the doctor's ſtudy, from eminent perſons and from learned ſocieties. There are various cauſes that have contributed to the delay, which the world need not be informed of; but the remote diſtance of our habitations, and the multiplicity of buſineſs in which each of us is ſtatedly engaged, are circumſtances pretty generally known, and which we hope will be admitted in excuſe for ſome part of the delay, and ſome part the bookſellers muſt anſwer for. However we are the leſs ſolicitous to apologize for not publiſhing this book ſooner, as we are ſatisfied it will be welcome now it comes; and that thoſe who, upon reading the firſt volume, have ſo earneſtly deſired the ſecond, will not be diſappointed when they read it.

We have only to add, our moſt ſincere wiſhes and prayers, that a book ſo admirably ſuited to improve the minds of men, eſpecially of the riſing generation, and to promote univerſal goodneſs, as this appears to be, may be attended with a bleſſing from on high.

June 26. 1751.

D. Jennings.
P. Doddridge.

THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

MIND.

PART II.

Communication of Useful knowledge.

INTRODUCTION.

THE chief design of the former part of this book is to lead us into proper methods for the improvement of our knowledge; let us now consider what are the best means of improving the minds of others, and of communicating to them the knowledge which we have acquired. If the treasures of the mind should be hoarded up and concealed, they would profit none besides the possessor, and even his advantage by the possession would be poor and narrow, in comparison of what the same treasures would yield, both to himself and to the world, by a free communication and diffusion of them. Large quantities of knowledge acquired and reserved by one man, like heaps of gold and silver, would contract a sort of rust and disagreeable aspect, by lying in everlasting secrecy and silence; but they are burnished and glitter by perpetual circulation through the tribes of mankind.

The two chief ways of conveying knowledge to others, are, that of verbal instruction to our disciples, or by writing and publishing our thoughts to the world.

Here therefore I shall first propose some observations which relate to the conveyance of knowledge to others, by regular lectures of verbal instruction, or by conversation;

tion; I ſhall repreſent ſeveral of the chief prejudices of which learners are in danger, with directions to guard againſt them, and then mention ſome of the eaſieſt and moſt effectual ways of convincing perſons of their miſtakes, and of dealing with their underſtandings, when they labour under the power of prejudice. I ſhall afterwards add, by way of Appendix, an eſſay written many years ago, on the ſubject of education, when I deſigned a more complete treatiſe of it.

CHAP. I.

Methods of Teaching and Reading Lectures.

HE that has learned any thing thoroughly, in a clear and methodical manner, and has attained a diſtinct perception, and an ample ſurvey of the whole ſubject, is generally beſt prepared to teach the ſame ſubject in a clear and eaſy method; for having acquired a large and diſtinct idea of it, and made it familiar to himſelf by frequent meditation, reading, and occaſional diſcourſe; he is ſuppoſed to ſee it on all ſides, to graſp it with all its appendices and relations in one ſurvey, and is better able to repreſent it to the learner in all its views, with all its properties, relations and conſequences. He knows which view or ſide of the ſubject to hold out firſt to his diſciple, and how to propoſe to his underſtanding that part of it which is eaſieſt to apprehend; and alſo knows how to ſet it in ſuch a light, as is moſt likely to allure and to aſſiſt his further inquiry.

But it is not every one who is a great ſcholar that always becomes the happieſt teacher, even though he may have a clear conception, and a methodical as well as an extenſive ſurvey of the branches of any ſcience. He muſt alſo be well acquainted with words, as well as ideas, in a proper variety; that when his diſciple does not take in the ideas in one form of expreſſion, he may change the phraſe into ſeveral forms, till at laſt he hits the underſtanding of his ſcholar, and enlightens it in the juſt idea of truth.

Beſides this, a tutor ſhould be a perſon of a happy and condeſcending temper, who has patience to bear with

with a ſlowneſs of perception, or want of ſagacity in ſome learners. He ſhould alſo have much candour of ſoul, to paſs a gentle cenſure on their impertinences, and to pity them in their miſtakes, and uſe every mild and engaging method for inſinuating knowledge into thoſe who are willing and diligent in ſeeking truth, as well as reclaiming thoſe who are wandering into error. But of this I have ſpoken ſomewhat already, in a chapter of the former part, and ſhall have occaſion to expreſs ſomething more of it ſhortly.

A very pretty and uſeful way to lead a perſon into the knowledge of any particular truth is, by queſtion and anſwer, which is the Socratical method of diſputation, and therefore I refer the reader to that chapter or ſection which treats of it. On this account, dialogues are uſed as a polite and pleaſant method of leading gentlemen and ladies into ſome of the ſciences, who ſeek not the moſt accurate and methodical treaſure of learning.

But the moſt uſual, and perhaps the moſt excellent way of inſtructing ſtudents in any of the ſciences is, by reading lectures as tutors in the academy do to their pupils.

The firſt work is to chooſe a book well written, which contains a ſhort ſcheme or abſtract of that ſcience; or at leaſt, it ſhould not be a very copious and diffuſive treatiſe. Or, if the tutor knows not any ſuch book already written, he ſhould draw up an abſtract of that ſcience himſelf, containing the moſt ſubſtantial and important parts of it, diſpoſed in ſuch a method as he beſt approves.

Let a chapter or ſection of this be read daily by the learner, on which the tutor ſhould paraphraſe in this manner, namely,

He ſhould explain both words and ideas more largely, and eſpecially what is dark and difficult ſhould be opened and illuſtrated, partly by various forms of ſpeech, and partly by apt ſimilitudes and examples. Where the ſenſe of the author is dubious, it muſt alſo be fixed and determined.

Where the arguments are ſtrong and cogent, they ſhould be enforced by ſome further paraphraſe, and the truth

truth of the inferences ſhould be made plainly to appear. Where the arguments are weak and inſufficient, they ſhould be either confirmed or rejected as uſeleſs; and new arguments, if need be, ſhould be added to ſupport that doctrine.

What is treated very conciſely in the author ſhould be amplified, and where ſeveral things are laid cloſely together, they muſt be taken to pieces and opened by parts.

Where the tutor differs from the author which he reads, he ſhould gently point out and confute his miſtakes.

Where the method and order of the book is juſt and happy, it ſhould be purſued and commended: where it is defective and irregular, it ſhould be corrected.

The moſt neceſſary, the moſt remarkable and uſeful parts of that treatiſe, or of that ſcience, ſhould be peculiarly recommended to the learners, and preſſed upon them, that they would retain it in memory; and what is more unneceſſary or ſuperfluous ſhould be diſtinguiſhed, leſt the learner ſhould ſpend too much time in the more needleſs parts of a ſcience.

The various ends, uſes, and ſervices of that ſcience, or of any part of it, ſhould be alſo declared and exemplified, as far as the tutor hath opportunity and furniture to do it; particularly in mathematics and natural philoſophy.

And if there be any thing remarkably beautiful or defective in the ſtyle of the writer, it is proper for the tutor to make a juſt remark upon it.

While he is reading and explaining any particular treatiſe to his pupils, he may compare the different editions of the ſame book, or different writers upon the ſame ſubject: he ſhould inform them where that ſubject is treated by other authors, which they may peruſe, and lead his diſciples thereby to a further elucidation, confirmation, or improvement of that theme of diſcourſe in which he is inſtructing them.

It is alluring and agreeable to the learner alſo, now and then to be entertained with ſome hiſtorical remarks, or any occurrences or uſeful ſtories which the tutor has met with, relating to the ſeveral parts of ſuch a

ſcience, provided he does not put off his pupils merely with ſuch ſtories, and neglect to give them a ſolid and rational information of the theme in hand. Teachers ſhould endeavour, as far as poſſible, to join profit and pleaſure together, and mingle delight with their inſtructions; but at the ſame time they muſt take heed, that they do not merely amuſe the ears, and gratify the fancy of their diſciples, without enriching their minds.

In reading lectures of inſtruction, let the teacher be very ſolicitous that the learners take up his meaning, and therefore he ſhould frequently inquire, whether he expreſſes himſelf intelligibly, whether they underſtand his ſenſe, and take in all his ideas, as he endeavours to convey them in his own forms of ſpeech.

It is neceſſary that he who inſtructs others ſhould uſe the moſt proper ſtyle for the conveyance of his ideas eaſily into the minds of thoſe who hear him; and though in teaching the ſciences, a perſon is not confined to the ſame rules by which we muſt govern our language in converſation, for he muſt neceſſarily make uſe of many terms of art and hard words, yet he ſhould never uſe them merely to ſhew his learning, nor affect ſounding language without neceſſity; a caution which we ſhall ſoon farther inculcate.

I think it very convenient and proper, if not abſolutely neceſſary, that when a tutor reads a following lecture to his pupils, he ſhould run over the foregoing lecture in queſtions propoſed to them, and by this means acquaint himſelf with their daily proficiency *. It is in vain for the learner to object, ſurely we are not ſchool-boys, to ſay our leſſons again; we came to be taught, and not to be catechiſed and examined. But alas! how is it poſſible for a teacher to proceed in his

* Note, This precaution, though never to be neglected, is of eſpecial importance when a pupil is entering on any new branch of learning where it is abſolutely neceſſary the fundamental definitions and principles ſhould not only be clearly underſtood, but ſhould be rendered very familiar to the mind: and probably moſt tutors have found young perſons ſadly bewildered, as they have gone on in their lectures, for want of a little more patience and care in this reſpect.

inſtructions, if he knows not how far the learner takes in and remembers what he has been taught?

Beſides, I muſt generally believe, it is ſloth or idleneſs, it is real ignorance, incapacity, or unreaſonable pride, that makes a learner refuſe to give his teacher an account how far he has profited by his laſt inſtructions. For want of this conſtant examination, young gentleman have ſpent ſome idle and uſeleſs years, even under the daily labours and inſpection of a learned teacher; and they have returned from the academy without the gain of any one ſcience, and even with the ſhameful loſs of their claſſical learning, that is, the knowledge of Greek and Latin, which they had learnt in the gramm.r-ſchool.

Let the teacher always accommodate himſelf to the genius, temper, and capacity of his diſciples, and practiſe various methods of prudence to allure, perſuade, and aſſiſt every one of them in their purſuit of knowledge.

Where the ſcholar has leſs ſagacity, let the teacher enlarge his illuſtrations; let him ſearch and find out where the learner ſticks, what is the difficulty; and thus let him help the labouring intellect.

Where the learner manifeſts forward genius, and a ſprightly curioſity by frequent inquiries; let the teacher oblige ſuch an inquiſitive ſoul by ſatisfying thoſe queſtions, as far as may be done by decency and conveniency; and where theſe inquiries are unſeaſonable, let him not ſilence the young inquirer with a magiſterial rebuff, but with much candour and gentleneſs poſtpone thoſe queſtions, and refer them to a proper hour.

Curioſity is a uſeful ſpring of knowledge: it ſhould be encouraged in children, and awakened by frequent and familiar methods of talking with them. It ſhould be indulged in youth, but not without a prudent moderation. In thoſe who have too much, it ſhould be limited by a wiſe and gentle reſtraint or delay, leſt by wandering after every thing, they learn nothing to perfection. In thoſe who have too little, it ſhould be excited, leſt they grow ſtupid, narrow-ſpirited, ſelf-ſatisfied, and never attain a treaſure of ideas, or an aptitude of underſtanding.

Let

Let not the teacher demand or expect things too ſublime and difficult from the humble, modeſt, and fearful diſciple: And where ſuch a one gives a juſt and happy anſwer, even to plain and eaſy queſtions, let him have words of commendation and love ready for him. Let him encourage every ſpark of kindling light, till it grow up to bright evidence and confirmed knowledge.

Where he finds a lad pert, poſitive, and preſuming, let the tutor take every juſt occaſion to ſhew him his error: let him ſet the abſurdity in complete light before him, and convince him by a full demonſtration of his miſtake, till he ſees and feels it, and learns to be modeſt and humble.

A teacher ſhould not only obſerve the different ſpirit and humour among his ſcholars, but he ſhould watch the various efforts of their reaſon, and growth of their underſtanding. He ſhould practiſe in his young nurſery of learning, as a ſkilful gardener does in his vegetable dominions, and apply prudent methods of cultivation to every plant. Let him with a diſcreet and gentle hand nip or prune the irregular ſhoots, let him guard and encourage the tender buddings of the underſtanding, till they be raiſed to a bloſſom, and let him kindly cheriſh the younger fruits.

The tutor ſhould take every occaſion to inſtil knowledge into his diſciples, and make uſe of every occurrence in life, to raiſe ſome profitable converſation upon it; he ſhould frequently inquire ſomething of his diſciples, that may ſet their young reaſon to work, and teach them how to form inferences, and to draw one propoſition out of another.

Reaſon being that faculty of the mind which he has to deal with in his pupil, let him endeavour by all proper and familiar methods to call it into exerciſe, and to enlarge the powers of it. He ſhould take frequent opportunities to ſhew them when an idea is clear or confuſed, when the propoſition is evident or doubtful, and when an argument is feeble or ſtrong. And by this means their minds will be ſo formed, that whatſoever he propoſes with evidence and ſtrength of reaſon, they will readily receive.

When any uncommon appearances arise in the natural, moral, or political world, he should invite and instruct them to make their remarks on it, and give them the best reflections of his own, for the improvement of their minds.

He should by all means make it appear that he loves his pupils, and that he seeks nothing so much as their increase of knowledge, and their growth in all valuable acquirements: this will engage their affection to his person, and procure a just attention to his lectures.

And indeed there is but little hope that a teacher should obtain any success in his instructions, unless those that hear him have some good degree of esteem and respect for his person and character. And here I cannot but take notice by the way, that it is a matter of infinite and unspeakable injury to the people of any town or parish, where the minister lies under contempt. If he has procured it by his own conduct, he is doubly criminal, because of the injury he does to the souls of them that hear him: but if this contempt and reproach be cast upon him by the wicked, malicious, and unjust censures of men, they must bear all the ill consequences of receiving no good by his labours, and will be accountable hereafter to the great and divine Judge of all.

It would be very necessary to add in this place, (if tutors were not well apprized of it before), that since learners are obliged to seek a divine blessing on their studies, by fervent prayer to the God of all wisdom, their tutors should go before them in this pious practice, and make daily addresses to heaven for the success of their instructions.

CHAP. II.

Of an Instructive Style.

THE most necessary, and the most useful character of a style fit for instruction, is, that it be plain, perspicuous, and easy. And here I shall first point out all those errors in style, which diminish or destroy the perspicuity

perſpicuity of it, and then mention a few directions how to obtain a perſpicuous and eaſy ſtyle.

The errors of a ſtyle, which muſt be avoided by teachers, are theſe that follow:

I. The uſe of many foreign words, which are not ſufficiently naturalized and mingled with the language which we ſpeak or write. It is true, that in teaching the ſciences in Engliſh, we muſt ſometimes uſe words borrowed from the Greek and Latin, for we have not in Engliſh names for a variety of ſubjects which belong to learning; but when a man affects, upon all occaſions, to bring in long ſounding words from the ancient languages without neceſſity, and mingles French, and other outlandiſh terms and phraſes, where plain Engliſh would ſerve as well, he betrays a vain and fooliſh genius unbecoming a teacher.

II. Avoid a fantaſtic learned ſtyle, borrowed from the various ſciences, where the ſubject and matter do not require the uſe of them. Do not affect terms of art on every occaſion, nor ſeek to ſhow your learning by ſounding words and dark phraſes; this is properly called pedantry.

Young preachers juſt come from the ſchools are often tempted to fill their ſermons with logical and metaphyſical terms in explaining the text, and feed their hearers with ſonorous words of vanity. This ſcholaſtic language, perhaps, may flatter their own ambition, and raiſe a wonderment at their learning among the ſtaring multitude, without any manner of influence toward the inſtruction of the ignorant, or the reformation of the immoral or impious: theſe terms of art are but the tools of an artificer, by which his work is wrought in private; but the tools ought not to appear in the finiſhed workmanſhip.

There are ſome perſons ſo fond of geometry, that they bring in lines and circles, tangents and parabolas, theorems, problems, and poſtulates, upon all occaſions. Others who have dealt in aſtronomy borrow even their nouns and their verbs, in their common diſcourſe, from the ſtars and planets; inſtead of ſaying, Jacob had twelve ſons, they tell you, Jacob had as many ſons as there are ſigns in the zodiac. If they de-

ſcribe an inconſtant perſon, they make a planet of him, and ſet him forth in all his appearances, direct, retrograde, and ſtationary. If a candle be ſet behind the ſcreen, they call it eclipſed; and tell you fine ſtories of the orbit and the revolutions, the radii and the limb, or circumference of a cart-wheel.

Others again dreſs up their ſenſe in chemical language; extracts and oils, ſalts and eſſences, exalt and invigorate their diſcourſes: a great wit with them, is ſublimated ſpirit; and a blockhead, is *caput mortuum*. A certain doctor in his bill, ſwells in his own idea when he tells the town, that he has been counſellor to the counſellors of ſeveral kings and princes, and that he has arrived at the knowledge of the green, black, and golden dragon, known only to magicians and hermetic philoſophers. It would be well if the quacks alone had a patent for this language.

III. There are ſome fine affected words that are uſed only at court, and ſome peculiar phraſes that are ſounding or gaudy, and belong only to the theatre; theſe ſhould not come into the lectures of inſtruction: the language of poets has too much of metaphor in it to lead mankind into clear and diſtinct ideas of things: the buſineſs of poeſy is to ſtrike the ſoul with a glaring light, and to urge the paſſions into a flame by ſplendid ſhews, by ſtrong images, and a pathetic vehemence of ſtyle; but it is another ſort of ſpeech that is beſt ſuited to lead the calm inquirer into juſt conceptions of things.

IV. There is a mean vulgar ſtyle, borrowed from the lower ranks of mankind, the baſeſt characters, and meaneſt affairs of life: this is alſo to be avoided; for it ſhould be ſuppoſed, that perſons of a liberal education have not been bred up within the hearing of ſuch language, and conſequently they cannot underſtand it: beſides, that it would create very offenſive ideas, ſhould we borrow even ſimilies for illuſtration from the ſcullery, the dunghill, and the jakes.

V. An obſcure and myſterious manner of expreſſion and cloudy language is to be avoided. Some perſons have been led by education, or by ſome fooliſh prejudices, in a dark and unintelligible way of thinking and ſpeaking,

ſpeaking, and this continues with them all their lives, and clouds and confounds their ideas. Perhaps ſome of theſe may have been bleſſed with a great and comprehenſive genius, with ſublime natural parts, and a torrent of ideas flowing in upon them; yet for want of clearneſs, in the manner of their conception and language, they ſometimes drown their own ſubject of diſcourſe, and overwhelm their argument in darkneſs and perplexity. Such preachers as have read much of the myſtical divinity of the Papiſts, and imitated their manner of expreſſion, have many times buried a fine underſtanding under the obſcurity of ſuch a ſtyle.

VI. A LONG and tedious ſtyle is very improper for a teacher, for this alſo leſſens the perſpicuity of it. Some learned writers are never ſatisfied, unleſs they fill up every ſentence with a great number of ideas and ſentiments: they ſwell their propoſitions to an enormous ſize by explications, exceptions, and precautions, leſt they ſhould be miſtaken, and crowd them all into the ſame period; they involve and darken their diſcourſe by many a parentheſis, and prolong their ſentences to a tireſome extent, beyond the reach of a common comprehenſion: ſuch ſort of writers or ſpeakers may be rich in knowledge, but they are ſeldom fit to communicate it. He that would gain a happy talent for the inſtruction of others, muſt know how to diſentangle and divide his thoughts, if too many of them are ready to crowd into one paragraph; and let him rather ſpeak three ſentences diſtinctly and perſpicuouſly, which the hearer receives at once with his ears and his ſoul, than crowd all the thoughts into one ſentence, which the hearer has forgotten before he can underſtand it.

But this leads me to the next thing I propoſed, which was to mention ſome methods, whereby ſuch a perſpicuity of ſtyle may be obtained as is proper for inſtruction.

1. Accuſtom yourſelf to read thoſe authors who think and write with great clearneſs and evidence, ſuch as convey their ideas into your underſtanding as faſt as your eye or tongue can run over their ſentences; this will imprint upon the mind an habit of imitation, we ſhall learn the ſtyle with which we are very converſant, and practiſe it with eaſe and ſucceſs.

2. Get

2. Get a diſtinct and comprehenſive knowledge of the ſubject which you treat of; ſurvey it on all ſides, and make yourſelf perfect maſter of it: then you will have all the ſentiments that relate to it in your view and under your command, and your tongue will very eaſily clothe thoſe ideas with words which your mind has firſt made ſo familiar and eaſy to itſelf.

Scribendi recte ſapere eſt et principium et fons,
Verbaque provisam rem non invita ſequentur.
Hor. *de Arte Poet.*

Good teaching from good knowledge ſprings,
Words will make haſte to follow things.

3. Be well ſkilled in the language which you ſpeak; acquaint yourſelf with all the idioms and ſpecial phraſes of it, which are neceſſary to convey the needful ideas on the ſubject of which you treat, in the moſt various and moſt eaſy manner to the underſtanding of the hearer: the variation of a phraſe in ſeveral forms is of admirable uſe to inſtruct, it is like turning all ſides of the ſubject to view; and if the learner happens not to take in the ideas in one form of ſpeech, probably another may be ſucceſsful for that end.

Upon this account I have always thought it an uſeful manner of inſtruction, which is uſed in ſome Latin ſchools, which they call variation. Take ſome plain ſentence in the Engliſh tongue, and then turn it into many forms in Latin; as for inſtance, a wolf let into the ſheep-fold will devour the ſheep. If you let a wolf into the fold, the ſheep will be devoured: the wolf will devour the ſheep, if the ſheep-fold be left open. If the fold be not left ſhut carefully, the wolf will devour the ſheep: the ſheep will be devoured by the wolf, if it find the way into the fold open. There is no defence of the ſheep from the wolf, unleſs it be kept out of the fold. A ſlaughter will be made among the ſheep, if the wolf can get into the fold. Thus by turning the active voice of verbs into the paſſive, and the nominative caſe of nouns into the accuſative, and altering the connexion of ſhort ſentences by different adverbs or conjunctions,

and

and by ablative cafes with a prepofition brought inftead of the nominative, or by participles fometimes put inftead of the verbs, the negation of and the contrary, inftead of the affertion of the thing firft propofed, a great variety of forms of fpeech will be created, which fhall expreſs the fame ſenſe.

4. Acquire a variety of words, a *copia verborum*; let your memory be rich in fynonymous terms or words expreſſing the fame happy effect with the variation of the fame thing: this will not only attain the phrafes in the foregoing direction, but it will add a beauty alfo to your ſtyle, by ſecuring you from an appearance of tautology, or repeating the fame words too often, which fometimes may diſguſt the ear of the learner.

5. Learn the art of fhortening your ſentences, by dividing a long complicated period into two or three ſmall ones. When others connect and join two or three ſentences in one by relative pronouns, as which, whereof, wherein, whereto, &c. and by parentheſes frequently inſerted; do you rather divide them into diſtinct periods, or at leaſt if they muſt be united, let it be done rather by conjunctions and copulatives, that they may appear like diſtinct ſentences, and give leſs confuſion to the hearer or reader.

I know no method ſo effectual to learn what I mean, as to take now and then ſome page of an author, who is guilty of ſuch a long involved parenthetical ſtyle, and tranſlate it into plainer Engliſh, by dividing the ideas or the ſentences aſunder, and multiplying the periods, till the language become ſmooth and eaſy, and intelligible at firſt reading.

6. Talk frequently to young and ignorant perſons, upon ſubjects which are new and unknown to them, and be diligent to inquire whether they underſtand you or no; this will put you upon changing your phraſes and forms of ſpeech in a variety, till you can hit their capacity, and convey your ideas into their underſtanding.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of convincing other Perſons of any Truth; or delivering them from Errors and Miſtakes.

WHEN we are arrived at a juſt and rational eſtabliſhment in an opinion, whether it relate to religion or common life, we are naturally deſirous of bringing all the world into our ſentiments; and this proceeds from the affectation and pride of ſuperior influence upon the judgment of our fellow-creatures, much more frequently than it does from a ſenſe of duty or love to truth: ſo vicious and corrupt is human nature. Yet there is ſuch a thing to be found as an honeſt and ſincere delight in propagating truth, ariſing from a dutiful regard to the honour of our Maker, and an hearty love to mankind. Now if we would be ſucceſsful in our attempts to convince men of their errors, and to promote the truth, let us diveſt ourſelves as far as poſſible of that pride and affectation which I mentioned before, and ſeek to acquire that diſintereſted love to men and zeal for the truth, which will naturally lead us into the beſt methods to promote it. And here the following directions may be uſeful.

I. If you would convince a perſon of his miſtake, chooſe a proper place, a happy hour, and the fitteſt concurrent circumſtances for this purpoſe. Do not unſeaſonably ſet upon him when he has engaged in the midſt of other affairs, but when his ſoul is at liberty, and at leiſure to hear and attend. Accoſt him not upon that ſubject, when his ſpirit is ruffled or diſcompoſed with any occurrences of life, and eſpecially when he has heated his paſſions in the defence of a contrary opinion; but rather ſeize a golden opportunity, when ſome occurrences of life may caſt a favourable aſpect upon the truth of which you would convince him, or which may throw ſome dark and unhappy colour or conſequences upon that error from which you would fain deliver him. There are in life ſome *Molliſſima tempora fandi*, ſome very agreeable moments of addreſſing a perſon, which if rightly managed, may render your

your attempts more ſucceſsful, and his conviction eaſy and pleaſant.

II. MAKE it appear by your whole conduct to the perſon you would teach, that you mean him well, that your deſign is not to triumph over his opinion, nor to expoſe his ignorance, or his incapacity of defending what he aſſerts. Let him ſee that it is not your aim to advance your own character as a diſputant, nor to ſet yourſelf up for an inſtructor to mankind; but that you love him, and ſeek his true intereſt: and not only aſſure him of this in words, when you are entering on an argument with him, but let the whole of your conduct to him at all times demonſtrate your real friendſhip for him. Truth and argument come with particular force from the mouth of one whom we truſt and love.

III. THE ſofteſt and gentleſt addreſs to the erroneous, is the beſt way to convince them of their miſtakes. Sometimes it is neceſſary to repreſent to your opponent, that he is not far off from the truth, and that you would fain draw him a little nearer to it; commend and eſtabliſh whatever he ſays that is juſt and true, as our bleſſed Saviour treated the young ſcribe, when he anſwered well concerning the two great commandments; "Thou art not far," ſays our Lord, "from the king-"dom of heaven," Mark xii. 34. Imitate the mildneſs and conduct of the bleſſed Jeſus.

Come as near to your opponent as you can in all your propoſitions, and yield to him as much as you dare, in a conſiſtence with truth and juſtice.

It is a very great and fatal miſtake in perſons who attempt to convince or reconcile others to their party, when they make the difference appear as wide as poſſible: this is ſhocking to any perſon who is to be convinced, he will chooſe rather to keep and maintain his own opinions, if he cannot come into yours without renouncing and abandoning every thing that he believed before. Human nature muſt be flattered a little as well as reaſoned with, that ſo the argument may be able to come at his underſtanding, which otherwiſe will be thruſt off at a diſtance. If you charge a man with nonſenſe and abſurdities, with he-

reſy

reſy and ſelf-contradiction, you take a very wrong ſtep towards convincing him.

Remember that error is not to be rooted out of the mind of man by reproaches and railings, by flaſhes of wit and biting jeſts, by loud exclamations or ſharp ridicule: long declamations and triumph over our neighbour's miſtake will not prove the way to convince him; theſe are ſigns either of a bad cauſe, or of want of arguments or capacity for the defence of a good one.

IV. Set therefore a conſtant watch over yourſelf, leſt you grow warm in diſpute before you are aware. The paſſions never clear the underſtanding, but raiſe darkneſs, clouds, and confuſion in the ſoul: human nature is like water which has mud at the bottom of it, it may be clear while it is calm and undiſturbed, and the ideas like pebbles appear bright at the bottom; but when once it is ſtirred and moved by paſſion, the mud riſes uppermoſt, and ſpreads confuſion and darkneſs over all the ideas; you cannot ſet things in ſo juſt and ſo clear a light before the eyes of your neighbour, while your own conceptions are clouded with heat and paſſion.

Beſides, when your own ſpirits are a little diſturbed, and your wrath is awakened, this naturally kindles the ſame fire in your correſpondent, and prevents him from taking in your ideas, were they ever ſo clear; for his paſſions are engaged all on a ſudden for the defence of his own miſtakes, and they combat as fiercely as yours do, which perhaps may be awakened on the ſide of truth.

To provoke a perſon whom you would convince, not only rouſes his anger, and ſets it againſt your doctrine; but directs its reſentment againſt your perſon, as well as againſt all your inſtructions and arguments. You muſt treat an opponent like a friend, if you would perſuade him to learn any thing from you; and this is one great reaſon why there is ſo little ſucceſs on either ſide between two diſputants or controverſial writers, becauſe they are ſo ready to intereſt their paſſions in the ſubject of conteſt, and prevent the mutual light that might be given and received on

either ſide: ambition, indignation, and a profeſſed zeal, reign on both ſides: victory is the point deſigned, while truth is pretended, and truth oftentimes periſhes in the fray, or retires from the field of battle: the combatants end juſt where they began, the underſtandings hold faſt the ſame opinions; perhaps with this diſadvantage, that they are a little more obſtinate, and rooted in them without freſh reaſon, and they generally come off with the loſs of temper and charity.

V. NEITHER attempt nor hope to convince a perſon of his miſtake, by any penal methods or ſevere uſage: there is no light brought into the mind by all the fire and ſword, and bloody perſecutions that were ever introduced into the world. One would think that the princes, the prieſts, and the people, the learned and the unlearned, the great and the mean, ſhould have all, by this time, ſeen the folly and madneſs of ſeeking to propagate the truth by the laws of cruelty: we compel a beaſt to the yoke by blows, becauſe the ox and the aſs have no underſtanding; but intellectual powers are not to be fettered and compelled at this rate: men cannot believe what they will, nor change their religion and their ſentiments as they pleaſe; they may be made hypocrites by the forms of ſeverity, and conſtrained to profeſs what they do not believe; they may be forced to comply with external practices and ceremonies, contrary to their own conſciences; but this can never pleaſe God, nor profit men.

VI. IN order to convince another, you ſhould always make choice of thoſe arguments that are beſt ſuited to his underſtanding and capacity, his genius and temper, his ſtate, ſtation, and circumſtances. If I were to perſuade a ploughman of the truth of any form of church-government, it ſhould not be attempted by the uſe of the Greek and Latin fathers; but from the word of God, the light of nature, and the common reaſon of things.

VII. ARGUMENTS ſhould always be propoſed in ſuch a manner as may lead the mind onward to perceive the truth in a clear and agreeable light, as well as to conſtrain the aſſent by the power of reaſoning. Clear

ideas in many cases are as useful toward conviction, as a well-formed and unanswerable syllogism.

VIII. ALLOW the person you desire to instruct a reasonable time to enter into the force of your argument. When you have declared your own sentiments in the brightest manner of illustration, and enforced them with the most convincing arguments, you are not to suppose that your friends should immediately be convinced and receive the truth: habitude in a particular way of thinking, as well as in most other things, obtains the force of nature, and you cannot expect to wean a man from his accustomed errors but by slow degrees, and by his own assistance; entreat him therefore not to judge on the sudden, nor determine against you at once, but that he would please to review your scheme, reflect upon your arguments with all the impartiality he is capable of, and take time to think these over again at large; at least that he would be disposed to hear you speak yet further on this subject, without pain or aversion.

Address him therefore in an obliging manner, and say, I am not so fond as to think I have placed the subject in such lights, as to throw you on a sudden into a new track of thinking, or to make you immediately lay aside your present opinions or designs; all that I hope is, that some hint or other which I have given is capable of being improved by you to your own conviction, or possibly it may lead you into such a train of reasoning, as in time to effect a change in your thoughts. Which hint leads me to add,

IX. LABOUR as much as possible to make the person you would teach his own instructor. Human nature may be allured, by a secret pleasure and pride in its own reasoning, to seem to find out by itself the very thing that you would teach; and there are some persons that have so much of this natural bias towards self rooted in them, that they can never be convinced of a mistake by the plainest and strongest arguments to the contrary, though the demonstration glare in their faces; but they may be tempted by such gentle insinuations to follow a track of thought, which you propose, till they have wound themselves out of their own error,

and

and led themſelves hereby into your opinion; if you do but let it appear that they are under their own guidance rather than yours. And perhaps there is nothing which ſhews more dexterity of addreſs, than this ſecret influence over the minds of others, which they do not diſcern even while they follow it.

X. If you gain the main point in queſtion, be not very ſolicitous about the nicety with which it ſhall be expreſſed. Mankind is ſo vain a thing, that it is not willing to derive from another, and though it cannot have every thing from itſelf, yet it would ſeem at leaſt to mingle ſomething of its own with what it derives elſewhere: therefore when you have ſet your ſentiment in the fulleſt light, and proved it in the moſt effectual manner, an opponent will bring in ſome frivolous and uſeleſs diſtinction, on purpoſe to change the form of words in the queſtion, and acknowledge that he receives your propoſition in ſuch a ſenſe, and in ſuch a manner of expreſſion, though he cannot receive it in your terms and phraſes. Vanillus will confeſs he is now convinced, that a man who behaves well in the ſtate ought not to be puniſhed for his religion; but yet he will not conſent to allow an univerſal toleration of all religions that do not injure the ſtate, which is the propoſition I had been proving. Well, let Vanillus therefore uſe his own language, I am glad he is convinced of the truth; he ſhall have leave to dreſs it in his own way.

To theſe directions I ſhall add two remarks in the concluſion of this chapter, which would not ſo properly fall under the preceding directions.

I. Rem. When you have laboured to inſtruct a perſon in ſome controverted truth, and yet he retains ſome prejudice againſt it, ſo that he doth not yield to the convincing force of your arguments, you may ſometimes have happy ſucceſs in convincing him of that truth, by ſetting him to read a weak author, who writes againſt it. A young reader will find ſuch pleaſure in being able to anſwer the arguments of the oppoſer, that he will drop his former prejudices againſt the truth, and yield to the power and evidence of your reaſons. I confeſs this looks like ſet-

ting up one prejudice to overthrow another; but where prejudices cannot be fairly removed by dint of reaſon, the wiſeſt and beſt of teachers will ſometimes find it neceſſary to make a way for reaſon and truth to take place by this contraſt of prejudices.

II. Rem. When our deſign is to convince a whole family or community of perſons of any miſtake, or to lead them into any truth, we may juſtly ſuppoſe there are various reigning prejudices among them; and therefore it is not ſafe to attempt, nor ſo eaſy to effect it, by addreſſing the whole number at once. Such a method has been often found to raiſe a ſudden alarm, and has produced a violent oppoſition even to the moſt fair, pious, and uſeful propoſal; ſo that he who made the motion could never carry his point.

We muſt therefore firſt make as many as we can of the moſt intelligent and learned, at leaſt the moſt leading perſons amongſt them, by addreſſing them apart prudently, and offering proper reaſons, till they are convinced and engaged on the ſide of the truth; and theſe may with more ſucceſs apply themſelves to others of the ſame community; yet the original propoſer ſhould not neglect to make a diſtinct application to all the reſt, ſo far as circumſtances admit.

Where a thing is to be determined by a number of votes, he ſhould labour to ſecure a good majority, and then take care that the moſt proper perſons ſhould move and argue the matter in public, leſt it be quaſhed in the very firſt propoſal by ſome prejudice againſt the propoſer.

So unhappily are our circumſtances ſituated in this world, that if truth, and juſtice, and goodneſs could put on human forms, and deſcend from heaven to propoſe the moſt divine and uſeful doctrines, and bring with them the cleareſt evidence, and publiſh them at once to a multitude whoſe prejudices are engaged againſt them, the propoſal would be vain and fruitleſs, and would neither convince nor perſuade. So neceſſary is it to join art and dexterity, together with the force of reaſon, to convince mankind of truth, unleſs we came furniſhed

furniſhed with miracles or omnipotence to create a conviction*.

CHAP. IV.

Of Authority, of the Abuſe of it, and of its real and proper Uſe and Service.

THE influence which other perſons have upon our opinions is uſually called authority. The power of it is ſo great and widely extenſive, that there is ſcarcely any perſon in the world entirely free from the impreſſion of it, even after their utmoſt watchfulneſs and care to avoid it. Our parents and tutors, yea our very nurſes, determine a multitude of our ſentiments; our friends, our neighbours, the cuſtom of the country where we dwell, and the eſtabliſhed opinions of mankind, form our belief; the great, the pious, the learned, and the ancient, the king, the prieſt, and the philoſopher, are characters of mighty efficacy to perſuade us to receive what they dictate. Theſe may be ranked under different heads of prejudice, but they are all of a kindred nature, and may be reduced to this one ſpring or head of authority.

I have treated of theſe particularly in Logic, Part II. Chap. III. Sec. 4th. Yet a few other remarks occurring among my papers, I thought it not improper to let them find a place here.

Cicero was well acquainted with the unhappy influences of authority, and complains of it in his firſt book, *De natura Deorum*. "In diſputes and controverſies (ſays he) it is not ſo much the author, or "patrons of any opinion, as the weight and force of "argument, which ſhould influence the mind. The "authority of thoſe who teach is a frequent hinder-"ance to thoſe who learn, becauſe they utterly neglect

* The conduct of Chriſt and his apoſtles, (armed as they were with ſupernatural powers), in the gradual openings of truth, againſt which the minds of their diſciples were ſtrongly prejudiced, may not only ſecure ſuch an addreſs from the imputation of diſhoneſt craft, but may demonſtrate the expediency, and in ſome caſes the neceſſity, of attending to it.

" to exercise their own judgment, taking for granted " whatsoever others whom they reverence have judged " for them. I can by no means approve, what we " learn from the Pythagoreans, that if any thing af- " ferted in disputation was questioned, they were " wont to answer, *Ipse dixit*, i. e. He himself said so, " meaning Pythagoras." So far did prejudice prevail, that authority without reason was sufficient to determine disputes and to establish truth.

All human authority, though it be ever so ancient, though it hath had universal sovereignty, and swayed all the learned and the vulgar world for some thousands of years, yet has no certain and undoubted claim to truth: nor is it any violation of good manners, to enter a caveat with due decency against its pretended dominion. What is there among all the sciences that has been longer established and more universally received ever since the days of Aristotle, and perhaps for ages before he lived, than this, that all heavy bodies whatsoever tend toward the centre of the earth? But Sir Isaac Newton has found that those bulky and weighty bodies, the earth and all the planets, tend toward the centre of the sun, whereby the authority of near three thousand years or more is not only called in question, but actually refuted and renounced.

Again, Was ever any thing more universally agreed among the nation of the poets and critics, than that Homer and Virgil are inimitable writers of heroic poems? And whoever presumed to attack their writings or their reputation was either condemned for his malice, or derided for his folly. These ancient authors have been supposed to derive peculiar advantages to aggrandize their verses from the Heathen theology, and that variety of appearances in which they could represent their gods, and mingle them with the affairs of men: yet within these few years Sir Richard Blackmore (whose prefaces are universally esteemed superior in their kind to any of his poems) has ventured to pronounce some noble truths in that excellent preface to his poem called Alfred, and has bravely demonstrated there, beyond all possible exception, that both Virgil and Homer are often guilty of very gross blunders, indecencies,

decencies, and ſhameful improprieties; and that they were ſo far from deriving any advantage from the rabble of Heathen gods, that their theology almoſt unavoidably expoſed them to many of thoſe blunders; and that it is not poſſible upon the foot of Gentile ſuperſtition, to write a perfect epic poem: whereas the ſacred religion of the Bible would furniſh a poem with much more juſt and glorious ſcences and a nobler machinery.

Mr Dennis alſo had made it appear in his eſſays ſome years before, that there were no images ſo ſublime in the brighteſt of the Heathen writers, as thoſe with which we are furniſhed in the poetic parts of the holy ſcripture: and Rapin, the French critic, dared to profeſs the ſame ſentiments, notwithſtanding the world of poets and critics had ſo univerſally and unanimouſly exalted the Heathen writers to the ſovereignty for ſo many ages. If we would find out the truth in many caſes, we muſt dare to deviate from the long-beaten track, and venture to think with a juſt and unbiaſſed liberty.

Though it be neceſſary to guard againſt the evil influences of authority, and the prejudices derived thence, becauſe it has introduced thouſands of errors and miſchiefs into the world, yet there are three eminent and remarkable caſes wherein authority, or the ſentiments of other perſons, muſt or will determine the judgments and practice of mankind.

I. PARENTS are appointed to judge for their children in their younger years, and to inſtruct them what they ſhould believe, and what they ſhould practiſe in the civil and religious life. This is a dictate of nature, and doubtleſs it would have been ſo in a ſtate of innocence. It is impoſſible that children ſhould be capable of judging for themſelves, before their minds are furniſhed with a competent number of ideas, before they are acquainted with any principles and rules of juſt judgment, and before their reaſon is grown up to any degrees of maturity and proper exerciſes upon ſuch ſubjects.

I will not ſay, that a child ought to believe nonſenſe and impoſſibility becauſe his father bids him; for ſo far

as

as the impoſſibility appears, he cannot believe it: nor will I ſay, he ought to aſſent to all the falſe opinions of his parents, or to practiſe idolatry and murder, or miſchief, at their command: yet a child knows not any better way to find out what he ſhould believe and what he ſhould practiſe, before he can poſſibly judge for himſelf, than to run to his parents, and receive their ſentiments and their directions.

You will ſay, This is hard indeed, that the child of a Heathen idolater, or a a cruel cannibal, is laid under a ſort of neceſſity by nature of ſinning againſt the light of nature. I grant it is hard indeed, but it is only owing to our original fall and apoſtacy: the law of nature continues as it was in innocence, namely, that a parent ſhould judge for his child; but, if the parent judges ill, the child is greatly expoſed by it, through that univerſal diſorder that is brought into the world by the ſin of Adam, our common father: and from the equity and goodneſs of God we may reaſonably infer, that the great Judge of all will do right; he will balance the ignorance and incapacity of the child, with the criminal nature of the offence in thoſe puerile inſtances, and will not puniſh beyond juſt demerit.

Beſides, what could God, as a Creator, do better for children in their minority, than to commit them to the care and inſtruction of parents: none are ſuppoſed to be ſo much concerned for the happineſs of children as their parents are; therefore it is the ſafeſt ſtep to happineſs, according to the original law of creation, to follow their directions, their parents reaſon acting for them, before they have reaſon of their own in proper exerciſe; nor indeed is there any better general rule in our fallen ſtate, by which children are capable of being governed, though in many particular caſes it may lead them far aſtray from virtue and happineſs.

If children by providence be caſt under ſome happier inſtructions, contrary to their parents erroneous opinions, I cannot ſay it is the duty of ſuch children to follow error, when they diſcern it to be error, becauſe their father believes it; what I ſaid before, is to be interpreted only of thoſe that are under the immediate care and education of their parents, and not yet arrived at years capable of examination; I know not how

thoſe

theſe can be freed from receiving this dictate of parental authority in their youngeſt years, except by immediate or divine inſpiration.

It is hard to ſay at what exact time of life the child is exempted from the ſovereignty of parental dictates. Perhaps it is much juſter to ſuppoſe, that this ſovereignty diminiſhes by degrees as the child grows in underſtanding and capacity, and is more and more capable of exerting his own intellectual powers, than to limit this matter by months and years.

When childhood and youth are ſo far expired, that the reaſoning faculties are grown up to any juſt meaſure of maturity, it is certain that perſons ought to begin to inquire into the reaſons of their own faith and practice in all the affairs of life and religion; but as reaſon does not arrive at this power and ſelf-ſufficiency in any ſingle moment of time, ſo there is no ſingle moment when a child ſhould at once caſt off all its former beliefs and practices; but by degrees and in ſlow ſucceſſion he ſhould examine them, as opportunity and advantages offer; and either confirm, or doubt of, or change them, according to the leadings of conſcience and reaſon, with all its beſt advantages of information.

When we are arrived at manly age, there is no perſon on earth, no ſet or ſociety of men whatſoever, that have power and authority given them by God, the Creator and Governor of the world, abſolutely to dictate to others their opinions or practices in the moral and religious life. God has given every man reaſon to judge for himſelf, in higher or in lower degrees. Where leſs is given, leſs will be required. But we are juſtly chargeable with criminal ſloth, and miſimprovement of the talents with which our Creator has intruſted us, if we take all things for granted which others aſſert, and believe and practiſe all things which they dictate, without due examination.

II. ANOTHER caſe wherein authority muſt govern our aſſent, is in many matters of fact. Here we may and ought to be determined by the declarations or narratives of other men; though I muſt confeſs this is uſually called teſtimony rather than authority. It is upon

upon this foot, that every ſon or daughter among mankind are required to believe that ſuch and ſuch perſons are their parents, for they can never be informed of it but by the dictates of others. It is by teſtimony that we are to believe the laws of our country, and to pay all proper deference to the prince, and to magiſtrates, in ſubordinate degrees of authority, though we did not actually ſee them choſen, crowned, or inveſted with their title and character. It is by teſtimony that we are to believe the laws of our country, and to pay all proper deference to the prince, and to magiſtrates, in ſubordinate degrees of authority, though we did not actually ſee them choſen, crowned, or inveſted with their title and character. It is by teſtimony that we are neceſſitated to believe there is ſuch a city as Canterbury or York, though perhaps we have never been at either; that there are ſuch perſons as Papiſts at Paris and Rome, and that there are many foolish and cruel tenets in their religion. It is by teſtimony we believe that Chriſtianity and the books of the Bible have been faithfully delivered down to us through many generations; that there was ſuch a perſon as Chriſt our Saviour, that he wrought miracles, and died on the croſs, that he roſe again and aſcended to heaven.

The authority or teſtimony of men, if they are wiſe and honeſt, if they had full opportunities and capacities of knowing the truth, and are free from all ſuſpicion of deceit in relating it, ought to ſway our aſſent; eſpecially when multitudes concur in the ſame teſtimony, and when there are many other attending circumſtances that raiſe the propoſition which they dictate to the degree of moral certainty.

But in this very caſe, even in matters of fact and affairs of hiſtory, we ſhould not too eaſily give in to all the dictates of tradition, and the pompous pretences to the teſtimony of men, till we have fairly examined the ſeveral things which are neceſſary to make up a credible teſtimony, and to lay a juſt foundation for our belief. There are and have been ſo many falſehoods impoſed upon mankind, with ſpecious pretences of eye and ear witneſſes, that ſhould make us wiſely cautious and

and juſtly ſuſpicious of reports, where the concurrent ſigns of truth do not fairly appear, and eſpecially where the matter is of conſiderable importance. And the leſs probable the fact teſtified is in itſelf, the greater evidence may we juſtly demand of the veracity of that teſtimony on which it claims to be admitted.

III. The laſt caſe wherein authority muſt govern us is, when we are called to believe what perſons under inſpiration have dictated to us. This is not properly the authority of men, but of God himſelf; and we are obliged to believe what that authority aſſerts, though our reaſon at preſent may not be able any other way to diſcover the certainty or evidence of the propoſition: It is enough if our faculty of reaſon, in its beſt exerciſe, can diſcover the divine authority which has propoſed it. Where doctrines of divine revelation are plainly publiſhed, together with ſufficient proofs of their revelation, all mankind are bound to receive them, though they cannot perfectly underſtand them; for we know that God is true, and cannot dictate falſehood.

But if theſe pretended dictates are directly contrary to the natural faculties of underſtanding and reaſon which God has given us, we may be well aſſured theſe dictates were never revealed to us by God himſelf. When perſons are really influenced by authority to believe pretended myſteries, in plain oppoſition to reaſon, and yet pretend reaſon for what they believe, this is but a vain amuſement.

There is no reaſon whatſoever that can prove or eſtabliſh any authority ſo firmly, as to give it power to dictate in matters of belief what is contrary to all the dictates of our reaſonable nature. God himſelf has never given us any ſuch revelations; and I think it may be ſaid, with reverence, he neither can nor will do it, unleſs he changes our faculties from what they are at preſent. To tell us we muſt believe a propoſition which is plainly contrary to reaſon, is to tell us that we muſt believe two ideas are joined, while, (if we attend to reaſon), we plainly ſee and know them to be diſjoined.

What

What could ever have eſtabliſhed the nonſenſe of tranſubſtantiation in the world, if men had been fixed in this great truth, that God gives no revelation contradictory to our own reaſon? Things may be above our reaſon, that is, reaſon may have but obſcure ideas of them, or reaſon may not ſee the connexion of theſe ideas, or may not know at preſent the certain and exact manner of reconciling ſuch propoſitions either with one another, or with other rational truths, as I have explained in ſome of my logical papers: but when they ſtand directly and plainly againſt all ſenſe and reaſon, as tranſubſtantiation does, no divine authority can be pretended to enforce their belief, and human authority is impudent to pretend to it. Yet this human authority, in the Popiſh countries, has prevailed over millions of ſouls, becauſe they have abandoned their reaſon, they have given up the glory of human nature to be trampled upon by knaves, and ſo reduced themſelves to the condition of brutes.

It is by this amuſement of authority (ſays a certain author), that the horſe is taught to obey the words of command, a dog to fetch and carry, and a man to believe inconſiſtencies and impoſſibilities. Whips and dungeons, fire and the gibbet, and the ſolemn terrors of eternal miſery after this life, will perſuade weak minds to believe againſt their ſenſes, and in direct contradiction to all their reaſoning powers. A parrot is taught to tell lies with much more eaſe and more gentle uſage; but none of all theſe creatures would ſerve their maſters at the expence of their liberty, had they but knowledge and the juſt uſe of reaſon.

I have mentioned three caſes, wherein mankind muſt or will be determined in their ſentiments by authority; that is, the caſe of children in their minority, in regard of the commands of their parents; the caſe of all men with regard to univerſal, complete, and ſufficient teſtimony of matter of fact; and the caſe of every perſon, with regard to the authority of divine revelation, and of men divinely inſpired; and under each of theſe I have given ſuch limitations and cautions as were neceſſary.

I proceed now to mention some other cases, wherein we ought to pay a great deference to the authority and sentiments of others, though we are not absolutely concluded and determined by their opinions.

1. When we begin to pass out of our minority, and to judge for ourselves in matters of the civil and religious life, we ought to pay very great deference to the sentiments of our parents, who in the time of our minority were our natural guides and directors in these matters. So in matters of science, an ignorant and unexperienced youth should pay great deference to the opinions of his instructors; and though he may justly suspend his judgment in matters which his tutors dictate, till he perceive sufficient evidence for them; yet neither parents nor tutors should be directly opposed without great and most evident reasons, such as constrain the understanding or conscience of those concerned.

2. Persons of years and long experience of human affairs, when they give advice in matters of prudence or civil conduct, ought to have a considerable deference paid to their authority by those that are young and have not seen the world, for it is most probable that the elder persons are in the right.

3. In the affairs of practical godliness, there should be much deference given to persons of long standing in virtue and piety. I confess in the particular forms and ceremonies of religion, there may be as much bigotry and superstition amongst the old as the young; but in questions of inward religion and pure devotion, or virtue, a man who has been long engaged in the sincere practice of those things, is justly presumed to know more than a youth with all his ungoverned passions, appetites, and prejudices about him.

4. Men in their several professions and arts, in which they have been educated, and in which they have employed themselves all their days, must be supposed to have greater knowledge and skill than others; and therefore there is due respect to be paid to their judgment in those matters.

5. In matters of fact, where there is not sufficient testimony to constrain our assent, yet there ought

be due deference paid to the narratives of perſons wiſe and ſober, according to the degrees of their honeſty, ſkill, and opportunity to acquaint themſelves therewith.

I confeſs, in many of theſe caſes, where the propoſition is a mere matter of ſpeculation, and doth not neceſſarily draw practice along with it, we may delay our aſſent till better evidence appear; but where the matter is of a practical nature, and requires us to act one way or another, we ought to pay much deference to authority or teſtimony, and follow ſuch probabilities where we have no certainty; for this is the beſt light we have; and ſurely it is better to follow ſuch ſort of guidance, where we can have no better, than to wander and fluctuate in abſolute uncertainty. It is not reaſonable to put out our candle, and ſit ſtill in the dark, becauſe we have not the light of ſunbeams.

CHAP. V.

Of treating and managing the Prejudices of Men *.

IF we had nothing but the reaſon of men to deal with, and that reaſon were pure and uncorrupted, it would then be a matter of no great ſkill or labour to convince another perſon of common miſtakes, or to perſuade him to aſſent to plain and obvious truths. But alas! mankind ſtand wrapt round in errors, and intrenched in prejudices; and every one of their opinions is ſupported and guarded by ſomething elſe beſide reaſon. A young bright genius, who has furniſhed himſelf with a variety of truths and ſtrong arguments, but is yet unacquainted with the world, goes forth from the ſchools like a knight errant, preſuming bravely to vanquiſh the follies of men, and to ſcatter light and truth through all his acquaintance. But he meets with huge giants and enchanted caſtles, ſtrong prepoſſeſſions

* For the nature and cauſes of prejudices, and for the preventing or curing them in ourſelves, ſee the Doctor's Syſtem of Logic, Part II. Chap. III. Of the ſprings of falſe judgment, or the doctrine of prejudices.

prepoſſeſſions of minds, habits, cuſtoms, educations, authority, intereſt, together with all the various paſſions of men, armed and obſtinate to defend their old opinions; and he is ſtrangely diſappointed in his generous attempts. He finds now that he muſt not truſt merely to the ſharpneſs of his ſteel, and to the ſtrength of his arm, but he muſt manage the weapons of his reaſon with much dexterity and artifice, with ſkill and addreſs, or he ſhall never be able to ſubdue errors and to convince mankind.

Where prejudices are ſtrong, there are theſe ſeveral methods to be practiſed in order to convince perſons of their miſtakes, and make a way for truth to enter into their minds.

I. By avoiding the power and influence of the prejudice, without any direct attack upon it: and this is done, by chooſing all the ſlow, ſoft, and diſtant methods of propoſing your own ſentiments, and your arguments for them, and by degrees leading the perſon ſtep by ſtep into thoſe truths which his prejudices would not bear if they were propoſed all at once.

Perhaps your neighbour is under the influence of ſuperſtition and bigotry in the ſimplicity of his ſoul; you muſt not immediately run upon him with violence, and ſhew him the abſurdity or folly of his own opinions, though you might be able to ſet them in a glaring light: but you muſt rather begin at a diſtance, and eſtabliſh his aſſent to ſome familiar and eaſy propoſitions, which have a tendency to refute his miſtakes, and to confirm the truth; and then ſilently obſerve what impreſſion this makes upon him, and proceed by ſlow degrees as he is able to bear; and you muſt carry on the work, perhaps at diſtant ſeaſons of converſation. The tender or diſeaſed eye cannot bear a deluge of light at once.

Therefore we are not to conſider our arguments merely according to our own notions of their force, and from thence expect the immediate conviction of others; but we ſhould regard how they are likely to be received by the perſons we converſe with; and thus manage our reaſoning, as the nurſe gives a child drink by ſlow degrees, leſt the infant ſhould be chocked or return it back

back again, if poured in too haſtily. If your wine be ever ſo good, and you are ever ſo liberal in beſtowing it on your neighbour, yet if his bottle into which you attempt to pour it with freedom has a narrow mouth, you will ſooner overſet the bottle, than fill it with wine.

Over-haſtineſs and vehemence in arguing is oftentimes the effect of pride; it blunts the poignancy of the argument, breaks its force, and diſappoints the end. If you were to convince a perſon of the falſehood of the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, and you take up the conſecrated bread before him and ſay, "You may ſee, and "taſte, and feel, this is nothing but bread; therefore "whilſt you aſſert that God commands you to believe "it is not bread, you moſt wickedly accuſe God of "commanding you to tell a lie." This ſort of language would only raiſe the indignation of the perſon againſt you, inſtead of making any impreſſions upon him. He will not ſo much as think at all on the argument you have brought, but he rages at you as a profane wretch, ſetting up your own ſenſe and reaſon above ſacred authority; ſo that though what you affirm is a truth of great evidence, yet you loſe the benefit of your whole argument by an ill management, and the unſeaſonable uſe of it.

II. We may expreſſly allow and indulge thoſe prejudices for a ſeaſon, which ſeem to ſtand againſt the truth, and endeavour to introduce the truth by degrees while thoſe prejudices are expreſsly allowed, till by degrees the advancing truth may of itſelf wear out the prejudice. Thus God himſelf dealt with his own people the Jews after the reſurrection of Chriſt: for though from the following days of Penteceſt when the goſpel was proclaimed and conferred at Jeruſalem, the Jewiſh ceremonies began to be void and ineffectual for any divine purpoſe, yet the Jews who received Chriſt the Meſſiah were permitted to circumciſe their children, and to practiſe many Levitical forms, till that conſtitution which then waxed old ſhould in time vaniſh away.

Where the prejudices of mankind cannot be conquered at once, but they will riſe up in arms againſt the evidence of truth, we muſt make ſome allowances, and

and yield to them for the preſent, as far as we can ſafely do it without real injury to truth: and if we would have any ſucceſs in our endeavours to convince the world, we muſt practiſe this compliance for the benefit of mankind.

Take a ſtudent who has deeply imbibed the principles of the Peripatetics, and imagines certain immaterial beings, called ſubſtantial forms, to inhabit every herb, flower, mineral, metal, fire, water, &c. and to be the ſpring of all its properties and operations; or take a Platoniſt who believes an *anima mundi*, an univerſal ſoul of the world to pervade all bodies, to act in and by them according to their nature, and indeed to give them their nature and their ſpecial powers; perhaps it may be very hard to convince theſe perſons by arguments, and conſtrain them to yield up theſe fancies. Well then, let the one believe his univerſal ſoul, and the other go on with his notion of ſubſtantial forms, and at the ſame time teach them how by certain original laws of motion, and the various ſizes, ſhapes, and ſituations of the parts of matter, allowing a continued divine concourſe in and with all, the ſeveral appearances in nature may be ſolved, and the variety of effects produced, according to the corpuſcular philoſophy, improved by Deſcartes, Mr Boyle, and Sir Iſaac Newton; and when they have attained a degree of ſkill in this ſcience, they will ſee theſe airy notions of theirs, theſe imaginary powers, to be ſo uſeleſs and unneceſſary, that they will drop them of their own accord: the Peripatetic forms will vaniſh from the mind like a dream, and the Platonic ſoul of the world will expire.

Or ſuppoſe a young philoſopher under a powerful perſuaſion that there is nothing but what has three dimenſions, length, breadth, and thickneſs, and conſequently that every finite being has a figure or ſhape (for ſhape is but the term and boundary of dimenſion): ſuppoſe this perſon, through the long prejudices of ſenſe and imagination, cannot be eaſily brought to conceive of a ſpirit, or a thinking being without ſhape and dimenſions; let him then continue to conceive a ſpirit with dimenſions; but be ſure in all his conceptions to retain

the idea of cogitation, or a power of thinking, and thus proceed to philoſophize upon the ſubject. Perhaps in a little time he will find that length, breadth, and ſhape, have no ſhare in any of the actions of a ſpirit; and that he can manifeſt all the properties and relations of ſuch a being, with all its operations of ſenſation, volition, &c. to be as well performed without the uſe of this ſuppoſed ſhape or theſe dimenſions; and that all theſe operations and theſe attributes may be aſcribed to a ſpirit, conſidered merely as a power of thinking. And when he further conceives that God, the infinite Spirit, is an almighty, ſelf exiſting, thinking power, without ſhape and dimenſions of length, breadth, and depth, he may then ſuppoſe the human ſpirit may be an inferior ſelf-ſubſiſting power of thought; and he may be inclined to drop the ideas of dimenſion and figure by degrees, when he ſees and is convinced they do nothing towards thinking, nor are they neceſſary to aſſiſt or explain the operations or properties of a ſpirit.

I may give another inſtance of the ſame practice, where there is a prejudicate fondneſs of particular words and phraſes. Suppoſe a man is educated in an unhappy form of ſpeech, whereby he explains ſome great doctrine of the goſpel, and by the means of this phraſe he has imbibed a very falſe idea of that doctrine: yet he is ſo bigoted to his form of words, that he imagines if thoſe words are omitted the doctrine is loſt. Now, if I cannot poſſibly perſuade him to part with his improper terms, I will indulge them a little, and try to explain them in a ſcriptural ſenſe, rather than let him go on in his miſtaken ideas.

Credonius believes that Chriſt deſcended into hell: I think the word *hell*, as now commonly underſtood, is very improper here; but ſince the bulk of Chriſtians, and Credonius among them, will by no means part with the word out of their Engliſh creed, I will explain the word *hell* to ſignify the ſtate of the dead, or the ſeparate ſtate of ſouls; and thus lead my friend into more juſt ideas of the truth, namely, that the ſoul of Chriſt exiſted three days in the ſtate of ſeparation from his body, or was in the inviſible world, which might be originally called *hell* in Engliſh, as well as *hades* in Greek.

Anilla

Anilla has been bred a Papiſt all her days, and though ſhe does not know much of religion, yet ſhe reſolves never to part from the Roman Catholic faith, and is obſtinately bent againſt a change. Now I cannot think it unlawful to teach her the true Chriſtian, that is, the Proteſtant religion, out of the Epiſtle to the Romans, and ſhew her that the ſame doctrine is contained in the Catholic Epiſtles of St Peter, James, and Jude: and thus let her live and die a good Chriſtian, in the belief of the religion I teach her out of the New Teſtament, while ſhe imagines ſhe is a Roman Catholic ſtill, becauſe ſhe finds the doctrine ſhe is taught in the Catholic Epiſtles, and in that to the Romans.

I grant it is moſt proper there ſhould be different words (as far as poſſible) applied to different ideas; and this rule ſhould never be diſpenſed with, if we had to do only with the reaſon of mankind; but their various prejudices and zeal for ſome party-phraſes ſometimes make it neceſſary that we ſhould lead them into truth under the covert of their own beloved forms of ſpeech, rather than permit them to live and die obſtinate and unconvincible in any dangerous miſtake: whereas an attempt to deprive them of their old eſtabliſhed words, would raiſe ſuch a tumult within them, as to render their conviction hopeleſs.

III. Sometimes we may make uſe of the very prejudices under which a perſon labours, in order to convince him of ſome particular truth, and argue with him upon his own profeſſed principles as though they were true. This is called *argumentum ad hominem*, and is another way of dealing with the prejudices of men.

Suppoſe a Jew lies ſick of a fever, and is forbidden flеſh by his phyſician; but hearing that rabbits were provided for the dinner of the family, deſired earneſtly to eat of them; and ſuppoſe he became impatient becauſe his phyſician did not permit him, and he inſiſted upon it, that it could do him no hurt: ſurely rather than let him perſiſt in that fancy and that deſire, to the danger of his life, I would tell him that theſe animals were ſtrangled, which ſort of food was forbidden by the Jewiſh law, though I myſelf may believe that law is now aboliſhed.

In

In the ſame manner was Tenerilla perſuaded to let Damon her huſband proſecute a thief, who broke open their houſe on a Sunday. At firſt ſhe abhorred the thoughts of it, and refuſed it utterly, becauſe if the thief were condemned, according to the Engliſh law, he muſt be hanged; whereas (ſaid ſhe) the law of God in the writings of Moſes does not appoint death to be the puniſhment of ſuch criminals, but tells us, that a thief ſhall be ſold for his theft, Exod. xxii. 3. But when Damon could no otherways convince her that the thief ought to be proſecuted, he put her in mind that the theft was committed on a Sunday morning; now the ſame law of Moſes requires that the Sabbath-breaker ſhall ſurely be put to death, Exod. xxxi. 15. Numb. xv. 35. This argument prevailed with Tenerilla, and ſhe conſented to the proſecution.

Encrates uſed the ſame means of conviction when he ſaw a Mahometan drink wine to exceſs, and heard him maintain the lawfulneſs and pleaſure of drunkenneſs: Encrates reminded him, that his own prophet Mahomet had utterly forbidden all wine to his followers; and the good man reſtrained his vicious appetite by his ſuperſtition, when he could no otherwiſe convince him that drunkenneſs was unlawful, nor withhold him from exceſs.

Where we find any perſon obſtinately perſiſting in a miſtake in oppoſition to all reaſon, eſpecially if the miſtake be very injurious or pernicious, and we know this perſon will hearken to the ſentiment or authority of ſome favourite name, it is needful ſometimes to urge the opinion and authority of that favourite perſon, ſince that is likely to be regarded much more than reaſon. I confeſs I am almoſt aſhamed to ſpeak of uſing any influence of authority, while I would teach the art of reaſoning. But in ſome caſes it is better that poor, filly, perverſe, obſtinate creatures, ſhould be perſuaded to judge and act right, by a veneration for the ſenſe of others, than to be left to wander in pernicious errors, and continue deaf to all argument, and blind to all evidence. They are but children of a larger ſize; and ſince they perſiſt all their lives in their minority, and reject all true reaſoning, ſurely we may try to perſuade them

them to practiſe what is for their own intereſt by ſuch childiſh reaſons as they will hearken to: we may overawe them from purſuing their own ruin by the terrors of a ſolemn ſhadow, or allure them by a ſugar-plum to their own happineſs.

But after all, we muſt conclude, that whereſoever it can be done, it is beſt to remove and root out thoſe prejudices which obſtruct the entrance of truth into the mind, rather than to palliate, humour, or indulge them; and ſometimes this muſt neceſſarily be done, before you can make a perſon part with ſome beloved error, and lead him into better ſentiments.

Suppoſe you would convince a gameſter that "gaming is not a lawful calling, or buſineſs of life, to "maintain one's ſelf by it," and you make uſe of this argument, namely, "That which doth not admit "us to aſk the bleſſing of God that we may get gain "by it, cannot be a lawful employment; but we cannot aſk the bleſſing of God on gaming, therefore, "&c." The minor is proved thus: "We cannot "pray that our neighbour may loſe; this is contrary "to the rule of ſeeking our neighbour's welfare, "and loving him as ourſelves; this is wiſhing miſchief "to our neighbour. But in gaming, we can gain "but juſt ſo much as our neighbour loſes: therefore "in gaming, we cannot pray for the bleſſing of God "that we may gain by it."

Perhaps the gameſter ſhrugs and winces, turns and twiſts the argument every way, but he cannot fairly anſwer it; yet he will patch up an anſwer to ſatisfy himſelf, and will never yield to the conviction, becauſe he feels ſo much of the ſweet influence of gaming, either towards the gratification of his avarice, or the ſupport of his expences. Thus he is under a ſtrong prejudice in favour of it, and is not eaſily convinced.

Your firſt work therefore, muſt be to lead him by degrees to ſeparate the thoughts of his own intereſt from the argument, and ſhew him that our own temporal intereſts, our livelihood, or our loſs, hath nothing to do to determine this point in oppoſition to the plain reaſon of things, and that he ought to put theſe conſiderations quite out of the queſtion, if he would be honeſt and ſincere

ſincere in his ſearch after truth or duty: and that he muſt be contented to hearken to the voice of reaſon and truth, even though it ſhould run counter to his ſecular intereſt. When this is done, then an argument may carry ſome weight or force with it toward his conviction.

In like manner, if the queſtion were, whether Matilda ought to expoſe herſelf and her other children to poverty and miſery, in order to ſupport the extravagances of a favourite ſon? Perhaps the mother can hear no argument againſt it; ſhe feels no conviction in the moſt cogent reaſonings, ſo cloſe do her fond prejudices ſtick to her heart. The firſt buſineſs here is to remove this prejudice. Aſk her therefore, whether it is not a parent's duty to love all her children, ſo as to provide for their welfare? Whether duty to God and her family ought not to regulate her love to a favourite? Whether her neighbour Floris did well in dreſſing up her daughters with expenſive gaudery, and neglecting the education of her ſon till the law his ruin? Perhaps by this method ſhe might be brought to ſee, that particular fondneſs for one child, ſhould have no weight or force in determining the judgment in oppoſition to plain duty: and ſhe may then give herſelf up to conviction in her own caſe, and to the evidence of truth, and thus correct her miſtaken practice.

Suppoſe you would convert Rominda from Popery, and you ſet all the abſurdities, errors, and ſuperſtitions of that church before her in the moſt glaring evidence; ſhe holds them faſt ſtill, and cannot part with them, for ſhe hath a moſt ſacred reverence for the faith and the church of her anceſtors, and cannot imagine that they were in the wrong. The firſt labour muſt be therefore to convince her, that our anceſtors were fallible creatures; that we may part with their faith without any diſhonour done to them; that all perſons muſt chooſe their religion for themſelves; that we muſt anſwer for ourſelves in the great day of judgment, and not we for our parents, nor they for us; that Chriſtianity itſelf had never been received by her anceſtors in this nation, if they had perſiſted always in the religion of their parents, for they were all Heathens. And when ſhe has by

by theſe methods of reaſoning been perſuaded that ſhe is not bound always to cleave to the religion of her parents, ſhe may then receive an eaſier conviction of the errors of Rome*.

CHAP. VI.

Of Inſtruction by Preaching.

SECT. I.

Wiſdom better than Learning in the Pulpit.

TYRO is a young preacher juſt come from the ſchools of logic and divinity, and advanced to the pulpit; he was counted a ſmart youngſter in the academy for analyſing a propoſition, and is full, even to the brim, with the terms of his art and learning. When he has read his text, after a ſhort flouriſh of introduction, he tells you, in how many ſenſes the chief word is taken, firſt among Greek Heathen writers, and then in the New Teſtament; he cites all the chapters and the verſes exactly, and endeavours to make you underſtand many a text before he lets you know fully what he means by his own. He finds theſe things at large in the critics, which he has conſulted, where this ſort of work is neceſſary and beautiful, and therefore he imagines it will become his ſermon well. Then he informs

* But perhaps of all theſe different methods of curing prejudices, none can be practiſed with greater pleaſure to a wiſe and good man, or with greater ſucceſs, where ſucceſs is moſt deſirable, than attempting to turn the attention of well-meaning people from ſome point in which prejudice prevails, to ſome other of great importance, and fixing their thoughts and heart on ſome great truth which they allow, and which leads unto conſequences contrary to ſome other notion which they eſpouſe and retain. By this means they may be led to forget their errors, while attentive to oppoſite truth; and in proportion to the degree in which their minds open, and their tempers grow more generous and virtuous, may be induced to reſign it. And ſurely nothing can give a benevolent mind more ſatisfaction, than to improve his neighbour in knowledge, and in goodneſs at the ſame time.

informs you very learnedly, of the various falſe expoſitions which have been given by divines and commentators on this part of ſcripture, and it may be the reaſons of each of them too; and he refutes them with much zeal and contempt. Having thus cleared his way, he fixes upon the expoſition which his judgment beſt approves, and dwells generally five or ten minutes upon the arguments to confirm it; and this he does not only in texts of darkneſs and difficulty, but even when ſcarcely a child could doubt of his meaning.

This grammatical exerciſe being performed, he applies himſelf to his logic; the text is divided and ſubdivided into many little pieces; he points you preciſely to the ſubject and the predicate, brings you acquainted with the agent and the object, ſhows you all the properties and the accidents that attend it, and would fain make you underſtand the matter and the form of it, as well as he does himſelf. When he has thus done, two thirds of the hour is ſpent, and his hearers are quite tired; then he begins to draw near to his doctrine, or grand theme of diſcourſe; and having told the audience, with great formality and exactneſs, what it is, and in what method he ſhall manage it, he names you one or two particulars under the firſt general head; and by this time finds it neceſſary to add, "He intended indeed to have been larger in the illuſtration of his ſubject, and he ſhould have given you "ſome reaſons for the doctrine, but he is ſorry that "he is prevented; and then he deſigned alſo to have "brought it down to the conſcience of every man by "a warm addreſs; but his time being gone, he muſt "break off." He hurries over a hint or two, which ſhould have been wrought up into exhortation or inſtruction, but all in great haſte, and thus concludes his work. The obſtinate and the careleſs ſinners go away unawakened, unconvinced; and the mourning ſoul departs uncomforted: the unbeliever is not led to faith in the goſpel, nor the immoral wretch to haſte or forſake his iniquities: the hypocrite and the man of ſincerity are both unedified, becauſe the preacher had not time. In ſhort, he has finiſhed his work, and he has done nothing.

When

When I hear this man preach, it brings to my remembrance the account which I have heard concerning the Czar of Muſcovy, the firſt time that his army beſieged a town in Livonia: he was then juſt come from his travels in Great Britain, where he and his miniſters of ſtate had learned the mathematics of an old acquaintance of mine: the Czar took great care to begin the ſiege in form; he drew all his lines of circumvallation and contravallation according to the rules of art; but he was ſo tedious and ſo exact in theſe mathematical performances, that the ſeaſon was ſpent, he was forced to break up the ſiege, and retire without any execution done upon the town.

Ergates is another ſort of preacher, a workman that need not be aſhamed: he had in his younger days but few of theſe learned vanities, and age and experience have now worn them all off: he preaches like a man who watches for our ſouls, as one that muſt give an account; he paſſes over leſſer matters with ſpeed, and purſues his great deſign, namely, to ſave himſelf and them that hear him, 1 Tim. iv. 16. And by following this advice of St Paul, he happily complies with that great and natural rule of Horace, always to make haſte towards the moſt valuable end:

Semper ad eventum feſtinat.——

He never affects to chooſe a very obſcure text, leſt he ſhould waſte too much of the hour in explaining the literal ſenſe of it; he reſerves all thoſe obſcurities till they come in courſe at his ſeaſons of public expoſition; for it is his opinion, that preaching the goſpel for the ſalvation of men carries in it a little different idea from a learned and critical expoſition of the difficult texts of ſcripture.

He knows well how to uſe his logic in his compoſures; but he calls no part of the words by their logical name, if there be any vulgar name that anſwers it: reading and meditation have furniſhed him with extenſive views of his ſubject, and his own good ſenſe hath taught him to give ſufficient reaſons for every thing he aſſerts: but he never uſes one of them till a proof is

needful. He is acquainted with the miſtaken gloſſes of expoſitors; but he thinks it needleſs to acquaint his hearers with them, unleſs there be evident danger that they might run into the ſame miſtake. He underſtands well what his ſubject is not, as well as what it is; but when he would explain it to you, he never ſays, firſt, negatively, unleſs ſome remarkable error is at hand, and which his hearers may eaſily fall into for want of ſuch a caution.

Thus in five or ten minutes at the moſt, he makes his way plain to the propoſition or theme on which he deſigns to diſcourſe; and being ſo wiſe as to know well what to ſay, and what to leave out, he proportions every part of his work to his time; he enlarges a little upon the ſubject, by way of illuſtration, till the truth becomes evident and intelligible to the weakeſt of his hearers; then he confirms the point with a few convincing arguments, where the matter requires it, and makes haſte to turn the doctrine into uſe and improvement. Thus the ignorant are inſtructed, and the growing Chriſtians are eſtabliſhed and improved: the ſtupid ſinner is loudly awakened, and the mourning ſoul receives conſolation: the unbeliever is led to truſt in Chriſt and his goſpel, and the impenitent and immoral are convinced and ſoftened, are melted and reformed. The inward voice of the Holy Spirit joins with the voice of the miniſter; the good man and the hypocrite have their proper portions aſſigned them, and the work of the Lord proſpers in his hand.

This is the uſual courſe and manner of his miniſtry. This method being natural, plain, and eaſy, he caſts many of his diſcourſes into this form; but he is no ſlave to forms and methods of any kind: he makes the nature of his ſubject, and the neceſſity of his hearers, the great rule to direct him what method he ſhall chooſe in every ſermon, that he may the better enlighten, convince, and perſuade. Ergates well knows that where the ſubject itſelf is entirely practical, he has no need of the formality of long uſes and exhortations; he knows that practice is the chief deſign of doctrine; therefore he beſtows moſt of his labour upon this part of his office, and intermingles much of the pathetic

pathetic under every particular: yet he wisely observes the special dangers of his flock, and the errors of the time he lives in; and now and then (though very seldom) he thinks it necessary to spend almost a whole discourse in mere doctrinal articles. Upon such an occasion, he thinks it proper to take up a little larger part of his hour in explaining and confirming the sense of his text, and brings it down to the understanding of a child.

At another time, perhaps, he particularly designs to entertain the few learned and polite among his auditors; and that with this view, that he may ingratiate his discourses with their ears, and may so far gratify their curiosity in this part of his sermon, as to give an easier entrance for the more plain, necessary, and important parts of it into their hearts. Then he aims at, and he reaches the sublime, and furnishes out an entertainment for the finest taste; but he scarcely ever finishes his sermon without compassion to the unlearned, and an address that may reach their consciences with words of salvation.

I have observed him sometimes, after a learned discourse, come down from the pulpit as a man ashamed and quite out of countenance: he has blushed and complained to his intimate friends, lest he should be thought to have preached himself, and not Christ Jesus his Lord: he has been ready to wish he had entertained the audience in a more unlearned manner, and on a more vulgar subject, lest the servants, and the labourers, and tradesmen there, should reap no advantage to their souls, and the important hour of worship should be lost as to their improvement. Well he knows, and keeps it upon his heart, that the middle and lower ranks of mankind, and people of an unlettered character, make up the greater part of the assembly; therefore he is ever seeking how to adopt his thoughts and his language, and far the greatest part of all his ministrations, to the instruction and profit of persons of common rank and capacity: it is in the midst of these that he hopes to find his triumph, his joy and crown in the last great day, for not many wise, not many noble are called.

There is ſo much ſpirit and beauty in his common converſation, that it is ſought and deſired by the ingenious men of his age: but he carries a ſevere guard of piety always about him, that tempers the pleaſant air of his diſcourſe, even in his brighteſt and freeſt hours; and before he leaves the place (if poſſible) he will leave ſomething of the favour of heaven there: in the parlour he carries on the deſign of the pulpit, but in ſo elegant a manner that it charms the company, and gives not the leaſt occaſion for cenſure.

His polite acquaintance will ſometimes rally him for talking ſo plainly in his ſermons, and ſinking his good ſenſe to ſo low a level: but Ergates is bold to tell the gayeſt of them, "Our public buſineſs, my friend, is "chiefly with the weak and the ignorant; that is, the "bulk of mankind; the poor receive the goſpel: the "mechanics and day-labourers, the women and chil-"dren of my aſſembly, have ſouls to be ſaved; I will "imitate my bleſſed Redeemer, in preaching the goſpel "to the poor; and learn of St Paul to become all things "to all men, that I may win ſouls, and lead many ſin-"ners to heaven by repentance, faith, and holineſs."

SECT. II.

A Branching Sermon.

I HAVE always thought it a miſtake in the preacher to mince his text or his ſubject too ſmall, by a great number of ſubdiviſions; for it occaſions great confuſion of the underſtandings of the unlearned. Where a man divides his matter into more general, leſs general, ſpecial, and more particular heads, he is under a neceſſity ſometimes of ſaying, *firſtly* or *ſecondly*, two or three times together, which the learned may obſerve; but the greater part of the auditory, not knowing the analyſis, cannot ſo much as take it into their minds, and much leſs treaſure up in their memories in a juſt and regular order; and when ſuch hearers are deſired to give ſome account of the ſermon, they throw the *thirdly's* and *ſecondly's* into heaps, and make very confuſed work in a rehearſal, by intermingling the

the general and the ſpecial heads. In writing a large diſcourſe this is much more tolerable* ; but in preaching it is leſs profitable and more intricate and offenſive.

It is as vain an affectation alſo to draw out a long rank of particulars in the ſame ſermon under any one general, and run up the number of them to *eighteenthly*, or *ſeven-and-twentiethly*. Men that take delight in this ſort of work, will cut out all their ſenſe into ſhreds ; and every thing that they can ſay upon any topic ſhall make a new particular.

This ſort of folly and miſtaken conduct appears weekly in Polyramus's lectures, and renders all his diſcourſes lean and inſipid. Whether it proceed from a mere barrenneſs of thought, and a native dryneſs of ſoul, that he is not able to vary his matter, and to amplify beyond the formal topics of an analyſis, or whether it ariſe from affectation of ſuch a way of talking, is hard to ſay : but it is certain that the chief part of his auditory are not over-much profited or pleaſed. When I ſit under his preaching, I fancy myſelf brought into the valley of Ezekiel's viſion ; it was full of bones, and behold, there were very many in the valley, and lo, they were very dry, Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 2.

It is the variety of enlargement upon a few proper heads that clothes the dry bones and fleſh, and animates them with blood and ſpirits ; it is this that colours the diſcourſe, makes it warm and ſtrong, and renders the divine propoſitions bright and perſuaſive ; it is this brings down the doctrine or the duty to the underſtanding and conſcience of the whole auditory, and commands the natural affections into the intereſt of the goſpel. In ſhort, it is this that, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, gives life and force, beauty and ſucceſs to a ſermon, and provides food for ſouls. A ſingle roſe-buſh, or a dwarf-pear, with all their leaves, flowers, and fruit about them, have more beauty and ſpirit in themſelves, and yield more food

* Eſpecially as words may be uſed to number the generals, and figures of different kinds and forms, to marſhall the primary and ſecondary ranks of particulars under them.

and pleaſure to mankind, than the innumerable branches, boughs, and twigs of a long hedge of thorns. The fruit will feed the hungry, and the flower will refreſh the fainting: which is more than can be ſaid of the thickeſt oak in Aſrian, when it has loſt its vital juice; it may ſpread its limbs indeed far and wide, but they are naked, withered, and ſapleſs.

SECT. III.

The Harangue.

IS it not poſſible to forſake one extreme without running into a worſe? Is there no medium between a ſermon made up of ſixty dry particulars, and a long looſe declamation, without any diſtinction of the parts of it? Muſt the preacher divide his works by the breaks of a minute-watch, or let it run on inceſſantly to the laſt word, like the flowing ſtream of the hour-glaſs that meaſures his divinity? Surely Fluvio preaches as though he knew no medium; and having taken a diſguſt heretofore at one of Polyramus's lectures, he reſolved his own diſcourſes ſhould have no diſtinction of particulars in them. His language flows ſmoothly in a long connection of periods, and glides over the ear like a rivulet of oil over poliſhed marble, and like that too leaves no trace behind it. The attention is detained in a gentle pleaſure, and (to ſay the beſt thing poſſible of it), the hearer is ſoothed in ſomething like divine delight; but he can give the inquiring friend ſcarcely any account what it was that pleaſed him. He retains a faint idea of the ſweetneſs, but has forgotten the ſenſe.

Tell me Fluvio, is this the moſt effectual way to inſtruct ignorant creatures in the ſeveral articles of faith, and the various duties of the Chriſtian life? Will ſuch a long uniform flow of language imprint all the diſtant parts of Chriſtian knowledge on the mind, in their beſt form and order? Do you find ſuch a gentle and gliding ſtream of words moſt powerful to call up the ſouls of ſinners from their dangerous or fatal lethargy? Will this indolent and moveleſs ſpecies of oratory make

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a thoughtleſs wretch attend to matters of infinite moment? Can a long purling ſound awaken a ſleepy conſcience, and give a periſhing ſinner juſt notices of his dreadful hazard? Can it furniſh his underſtanding and his memory with all the awful and tremendous topics of our religion, when it ſcarcely ever leaves any diſtinct impreſſion of one of them on his ſoul? Can you make the arrow wound where it will not ſtick? Where all the diſcourſe vaniſhes from the remembrance, can you ſuppoſe the ſoul to be profited or enriched? When you bruſh over the cloſed eye-lids with a feather, did you ever find it give light to the blind? Has any of your ſoft harangues, your continued threads of ſilken eloquence, ever raiſed the dead? I fear your whole aim is to talk over the appointed number of minutes upon the ſubject, or to practiſe a little upon the gentler paſſions, without any concern how to give the underſtanding its due improvement, or to furniſh the memory with any laſting treaſure, or to make a knowing and a religious Chriſtian.

Aſk old Wheatfield the rich farmer, aſk Plowdown your neighbour, or any of his family who have ſat all their lives under your miniſtry, what they know of the common truths of religion, or of the ſpecial articles of Chriſtianity? Deſire them to tell you what the goſpel is, or what is ſalvation? What are their duties toward God, or what they mean by religion? Who is Jeſus Chriſt, or what is the meaning of his atonement or redemption by his blood? Perhaps you will tell me yourſelf, that you have very ſeldom entertained them with theſe ſubjects. Well, inquire of them what is heaven? Which is the way to obtain it, or what hope they have of dwelling there? Entreat them to tell you, wherein they have profited as to holineſs of heart or life, or fitneſs for death. They will ſoon make it appear by their awkward anſwers, that they underſtood very little of all your fine diſcourſes, and thoſe of your predeceſſors, and have made but wretched improvement of forty years attendance at church. They have now and then been pleaſed, perhaps, with the muſic of your voice, as with the ſound of a ſweet inſtrument, and they miſtook that for devotion;

tion: but their heads are dark ſtill, and their hearts earthly; they are mere Heathens with a Chriſtian name, and know little more of God than their yokes of oxen. In ſhort, Polyramus's auditors have ſome confuſion in their knowledge, but Fluvio's hearers have ſcarcely any knowledge at all.

But you will tell me, your diſcourſes are not all made up of harangue: your deſign is ſometimes to inform the mind by a train of well-connected reaſonings, and that all your paragraphs in their long order prove and ſupport each other; and though you do not diſtinguiſh your diſcourſe into particulars, yet you have kept ſome inviſible method all the way, and, by ſome artificial gradations, you have brought your ſermon down to the concluding ſentence.

It may be ſo ſometimes, and I will acknowledge it: but believe me Flavio, this artificial and inviſible method carries darkneſs with it inſtead of light; nor is it by any means a proper way to inſtruct the vulgar, that is, the bulk of your auditory: their ſouls are not capable of ſo wide a ſtretch, as to take in the whole chain of your long-connected conſequences: you talk reaſon and religion to them in vain, if you do not make the argument ſo ſhort as to come within their graſp, and give a frequent reſt for their thoughts: you muſt break the bread of life into pieces to feed children with it, and part your diſcourſes into diſtinct propoſitions, to give the ignorant a plain ſcheme of any one doctrine, and enable them to comprehend or retain it.

Every day gives us experiments to confirm what I ſay, and to encourage miniſters to divide their ſermons into ſeveral diſtinct heads of diſcourſe. Myrtilla, a little creature of nine years old, was at church twice yeſterday: in the morning the preacher entertained his audience with a running oration, and the child could give her parents no other account of it, but that he talked ſmoothly and ſweetly about virtue and heaven. It was Ergate's lot to fulfil the ſervice of the afternoon; he is an excellent preacher, both for the wiſe and unwiſe: in the evening, Myrtilla very prettily entertained her mother with a repetition of the moſt conſiderable parts of the ſermon; for "Here," ſaid ſhe,

ſhe, "I can fix my thoughts upon firſt, ſecondly, and "thirdly, upon the doctrine, the reaſons, and the infer- "ences; and I know what I muſt try to remember, "and repeat it when my friends ſhall aſk me: but as "for the morning ſermon I could do nothing but hear "it, for I could not tell what I ſhould get by heart."

This manner of talking in a looſe harangue, has not only injured our pulpits, but it makes the ſeveral eſſays and treatiſes, that are written now a-days, leſs capable of improving the knowledge, or enriching the memory of the reader.

I will eaſily grant, that where the whole diſcourſe reaches not beyond a few pages, there is no neceſſity of the formal propoſal of the ſeveral parts, before you handle each of them diſtinctly, nor is there need of ſuch a ſet method: the unlearned and narrow underſtanding can take an eaſy view of the whole, without the author's pointing to the ſeveral parts. But where the eſſay is prolonged to a greater extent, confuſion grows upon the reader almoſt at every page, without ſome ſcheme or method of ſucceſſive heads in the diſcourſe to direct the mind and aid the memory.

If it be anſwered here, That neither ſuch treatiſes nor ſermons are a mere heap, for there is a juſt method obſerved in the compoſure, and the ſubjects are ranked in a proper order. It is eaſy to reply, That this method is ſo concealed, that a common reader or hearer can never find it; and you muſt ſuppoſe every one that peruſes ſuch a book, and much more that attends ſuch a diſcourſe, to have ſome good knowledge of the art of Logic before he can diſtinguiſh the various parts and branches, the connexions and tranſitions of it. To an uncleared eye or ear, it appears a mere heap of good things, without any method, form, or order; and if you tell your young friends they ſhould get it into their heads and hearts, they know not how to ſet about it.

If we inquire, how it comes to paſs that our modern ingenious writers ſhould affect this manner? I know no juſter reaſon to give for it, than a humorous and wanton contempt of the cuſtoms and practices of our forefathers; a ſenſible diſguſt taken at ſome of their miſtakes

miſtakes and ill conduct, at firſt tempted a vain generation into the contrary extreme near ſixty years ago; and now even to this day it continues too much in faſhion, ſo that the wiſe as well as the weak are aſhamed to oppoſe it, and are borne down with the current.

Our fathers formed their ſermons much upon the model of doctrine, reaſon, and uſe; and perhaps there is no one method of more univerſal ſervice, and more eaſily applicable to moſt ſubjects, though it is not neceſſary or proper in every diſcourſe: but the very names of doctrine and uſe are become now-a-days ſuch ſtale and old faſhioned things, that a modiſh preacher is quite aſhamed of them; nor can a modiſh hearer bear the ſound of thoſe ſyllables: a direct and diſtinct addreſs to the conſciences of ſaints and ſinners muſt not be named or mentioned, though theſe terms are ſcriptural, leſt it ſhould be hiſſed out of the church, like the garb of a round-head or a puritan.

Some of our fathers have multiplied their particulars under one ſingle head of diſcourſe, and run up the tale of them to ſixteen or ſeventeen. Culpable indeed, and too numerous! But, in oppoſition to this extreme, we are almoſt aſhamed in our age to ſay thirdly; and all fourthly's and fifthly's are very unfaſhionable words.

Our father's made too great account of the ſciences of logic and metaphyſics, and the formalities of definition and diviſion, ſyllogiſm and method, when they brought them ſo often into the pulpit; but we hold thoſe arts ſo much in contempt and defiance, that we had rather talk a whole hour without order and without edification, than be ſuſpected of uſing logic or method in our diſcourſes.

Some of our fathers neglected politeneſs perhaps too much, and indulged a coarſeneſs of ſtyle, and a rough or awkward pronunciation; but we have ſuch a value for elegancy, and ſo nice a taſte for what we call polite, that we dare not ſpoil the cadence of a period to quote a text of ſcripture in it, nor diſturb the harmony of our ſentences, to number or to name the heads of our diſcourſe. And for this reaſon, I have heard it hinted, that the name of CHRIST has been baniſh-

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ed out of polite ſermons, becauſe it is a monoſyllable of ſo many conſonants, and ſo harſh a ſound.

But, after all, our fathers, with all their defects, and with all their weakneſſes, preached the goſpel of Chriſt to the ſenſible inſtruction of whole pariſhes, to the converſion of ſinners from the errors of their way, and the ſalvation of multitudes of ſouls. But it has been the late complaint of Dr Edwards, and other worthy ſons of the eſtabliſhed church, that in too many pulpits now-a-days there are only heard ſome ſmooth declamation, while the hearers that were ignorant of the goſpel abide ſtill without knowledge, and the profane ſinners are profane ſtill. O that divine grace would deſcend and reform what is amiſs in all the ſanctuaries of the nation * !

CHAP. VII.

Of writing Books for the Public.

IN the explication and diſtinction of words and things by definition and deſcription, in the diviſion of things into their ſeveral parts, and in the diſtribution of things into their ſeveral kinds, be ſure to obſerve a juſt medium. We muſt not always explain and diſtinguiſh, define, divide, and diſtribute, nor muſt we always omit it: ſometimes it is uſeleſs and impertinent, ſometimes it is proper and neceſſary. There is confuſion brought into our argument and diſcourſe by too many, or by too few of theſe. One author plunges his reader into the midſt of things without due explication of them; another jumbles together without diſtinction all thoſe ideas which have any likeneſs; a third is fond of explaining every word, and coining diſtinctions between ideas

* It appears by the date, at the bottom of this paper in the MSS. that it was written in the year 1718. The firſt, and perhaps the ſecond ſection of it may ſeem now to be grown in a great meaſure out of date; but whether the third is not at leaſt as ſeaſonable now as ever, may deſerve ſerious conſideration. The author, ſince this was drawn up, hath delivered his ſentiments more fully in the firſt part of that excellent piece entitled, *An humble Attempt for the Revival of Religion*, &c.

ideas which have little or no difference: but each of these runs into extremes; for all these practices are equal hinderances to clear, just, and useful knowledge. It is not a long train of rules, but observation and good judgment, can teach us when to explain, define, and divide, and where to omit it.

In the beginning of a treatise, it is proper and necessary sometimes to premise some præcognita or general principles, which may serve for an introduction to the subject in hand, and give light or strength to the following discourse: but it is ridiculous, under a pretence of such introductions or prefaces, to wander to the most remote or distant themes, which have no near or necessary connexion with the thing in hand; this serves for no other purpose but to make a gaudy shew of learning. There was a professor of divinity, who began an analytical exposition of the Epistle to the Romans with such præcognita as these: first he shewed the excellence of man above other creatures, who was able to declare the sense of his mind by arbitrary signs; then he harangued upon the origin of speech; after that he told of the wonderful invention of writing, and inquired into the author of that art which taught us to paint sounds: when he had given us the various opinions of the learned on this point, and distributed writing into its several kinds, and laid down definitions of them all, at last he came to speak of epistolary writing, and distinguished epistles into familiar, private, public, recommendatory credentials, and what not? Thence he descended to speak of the superscription, subscription, &c.; and some lectures were finished before he came to the first verse of St Paul's epistle; the auditors, being half starved and tired with expectation, dropped away one by one, so that the professor had scarce any hearers to attend the college or the lectures which he had promised on that part of scripture.

The rules which Horace has given in his Art of Poetry would instruct many a preacher and professor of theology, if they would but attend to them. He informs us, that a wise author, such as Homer, who writes a poem of the Trojan war, would not begin a long and far-distant story of Jupiter, in the form of a swan im-

pregnating Leda with a double egg; from one part whereof Helen was hatched, who was married to Menelaus a Greek general, and then stolen from him by Paris, son of Priam king of Troy, which awakened the resentment of the Greeks against the Trojans.

Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo.

But the writer, says he, makes all proper haste to the event of things, and does not drag on slowly, perpetually turning aside from his point, and catching at every incident to prolong his story, as though he wanted matter to furnish out his tale.

Semper ad eventum festinat.

Though, I must confess, I cannot think Homer has always followed this rule in either of his two famous epic poems: but Horace does not hear what I say. There is also another rule near akin to the former.

As a writer or a speaker should not wander from his subject to fetch in foreign matter from afar, so neither should he amass together and drag in all that can be said, even on his appointed theme of discourse; but he should consider what is his chief design, what is the end he hath in view, and then to make every part of his discourse subserve that design. If he keep his great end always in his eye, he will pass hastily over those parts or appendages of his subject which have no evident connexion with his design, or he will entirely omit them, and hasten continually towards his intended mark; employing his time, his study and labour, chiefly on that part of his subject which is most necessary to attain his present and proper end.

This might be illustrated by a multitude of examples; but an author who should heap them together on such an occasion, might be in danger of becoming himself an example of the impertinence he is cautioning others to avoid.

After you have finished any discourse which you design for the public, it would be always best, if other

circumſtances would permit, to let it ſleep ſome time before you expoſe it to the world, that ſo you you may have opportunity to review it with the indifference of a ſtranger, and to make the whole of it paſs under a new and juſt examination; for no man can judge ſo juſtly of his own work, while the pleaſure of his invention and performance is freſh, and has engaged his ſelf-love too much on the ſide of what he has newly finiſhed.

If an author would ſend a diſcourſe into the world, which ſhould be moſt univerſally approved, he ſhould conſult perſons of very different genius, ſentiment, and party, and endeavour to learn their opinions of it. In the world it will certainly meet with all theſe. Set it therefore to view amongſt ſeveral of your acquaintance firſt, who may ſurvey the argument on all ſides, and one may happen to ſuggeſt a correction which is entirely neglected by others; and be ſure to yield yourſelf to the dictates of true criticiſm, and juſt cenſure, whereſoever you meet with them; nor let a fondneſs for what you have written blind your eyes againſt the diſcovery of your own miſtakes.

When an author deſires a friend to reviſe his work, it is too frequent a practice to diſallow almoſt every correction which a judicious friend would make; he apologizes for this word, and the other expreſſion; he vindicates this ſentence, and gives his reaſons for another paragraph, and ſcarcely ever ſubmits to correction; and this utterly diſcourages the freedom that a true friend would take in pointing out our miſtakes. Such writers who are ſo full of themſelves, may go on to admire their own incorrect performances, and expoſe their works and their follies to the world without pity *.

Horace, in his Art of Poetry, talks admirably well on this ſubject:

Quin ille

* To cut off ſuch chicanery, it may perhaps be the moſt expedient for a perſon conſulted, on ſuch an occaſion, to note down on a diſtinct paper, with proper references, the adviſed alterations, referring it to the author, to make ſuch uſe of them as he, on due deliberation, ſhall think fit.

Quintilio ſi quid recitares, corrige, ſodes,
Hoc, aiebat, et hoc; melius te poſſe negares
Bis terque expertum fruſtra; delere jubebat,
Et mali tornatos incudi reddere verſus.
Si defendere delictum, quam vertere, malles;
Nulla ultra verbum, aut operam inſumebat inanem,
Quin ſine rivali teque et tua ſolus amares.

Let good Quintilius all your lines reviſe,
And he will freely ſay, mend this and this;
Sir, I have often try'd, and try'd again,
I'm ſure I can't do better, 'tis in vain;
Then blot out every word, or try once more,
And file theſe ill-turn'd verſes o'er and o'er:
But if you ſeem in love with your own thought,
More eager to defend, than mend, your fault,
He ſays no more, but lets the fop go on,
And, rival free, admire his lovely own. CREECH.

If you have not the advantage of friends to ſurvey your writings, then read them over yourſelf, and all the way conſider what will be the ſentence and judgment of all the various characters of mankind upon them; think what one of your own party would ſay, or what would be the ſenſe of an adverſary: imagine what a curious or a malicious man, what a captious or an envious critic, what a vulgar or a learned reader would object, either to the matter, the manner, or the ſtyle: and be ſure and think with yourſelf, what you yourſelf could ſay againſt your own writing, if you were of a different opinion, or a ſtranger to the writer: and by theſe means you will obtain ſome hints whereby to correct and improve your own work, and to guard it better againſt the cenſures of the public, as well as to render it more uſeful to that part of mankind for whom you chiefly deſign it.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Writing and Reading Controversies.

SECT. I.

Of Writing Controverſies.

WHEN a perſon of good ſenſe writes on any controverted ſubject, he will generally bring the ſtrongeſt arguments that are uſually to be found for the ſupport of his opinion; and when that is done, he will repreſent the moſt powerful objections againſt it in a fair and candid manner, giving them their full force: and at laſt will put in ſuch an anſwer to thoſe objections as he thinks will diſſipate and diſſolve the force of them: and herein the reader will generally find a full view of the controverſy, together with the main ſtrength of argument on both ſides.

When a good writer has ſet forth his own opinion at large, and vindicate it with its faireſt and ſtrongeſt proofs, he ſhall be attacked by ſome pen on the other ſide of the queſtion; and if his opponent be a wiſe and ſenſible writer, he will ſhew the beſt reaſons why the former opinions cannot be true; that is, he will draw out the objections againſt them in their fulleſt array, in order to deſtroy what he ſuppoſes a miſtaken opinion: and here we may reaſonably ſuppoſe that an opponent will draw up his objections againſt the ſuppoſed error in a brighter light, and with ſtronger evidence, than the firſt writer did, who propounded his opinion which was contrary to thoſe objections.

If, in the third place, the firſt writer anſwers his opponent with care and diligence, and maintains his own point againſt the objections which were raiſed in the beſt manner: the reader may then generally preſume, that in theſe three pieces he has a complete view of the controverſy, together with the moſt ſolid and powerful arguments on both ſides of the debate.

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But when a fourth, and fifth, and sixth volume appears in rejoinders and replies, we cannot reasonably expect any great degrees of light to be derived from daily experience, that many mischiefs attend this prolongation of controversies among men of learning, which for the most part do injury to the truth, either by turning the attention of the reader quite away from the original point to other matters, or by covering the truth with a multitude of occasional incidents and perplexities, which serve to bewilder rather than guide a faithful inquirer.

Sometimes, in these latter volumes, the writers on both sides will hang upon little words and occasional expressions of their opponent, in order to expose them, which have no necessary connexion with the grand point in view, and which have nothing to do with the debated truth.

Sometimes they will spend many a page in vindicating their own character, or their own little sentences or accidental expressions, from the remarks of their opponent, in which expressions or remarks the original truth has no concern.

And sometimes again you shall find even writers of good sense, who have happened to express themselves in an improper and indefensible manner, led away by the fondness of self-love to justify those expressions, and vindicate those little lapses they were guilty of, rather than they will condescend to correct those little mistakes, or recall those improper expressions. O that we could put off our pride, our self-sufficiency, and our infallibility, when we enter into a debate of truth! But if the writer is guilty of mingling these things with his grand argument, happy will that reader be who has judgment enough to distinguish them, and to neglect every thing that does not belong to the original theme proposed and disputed.

Yet here it may be proper to put in one exception to this general observation or remark, namely, when the second writer attacks only a particular or collateral opinion which was maintained by the first, then the fourth writing may be supposed to contain a necessary part of the complete force of the argument, as well as

the second and third, because the first writing only occasionally or collaterally mentioned that sentiment which the second attacks and opposes; and, in such a case, the second may be esteemed as the first treatise on that controversy. It would take up too much time should we mention instances of this kind, which might be pointed to in most of our controversial writers, and it might be invidious to enter into the detail *.

SECT. II.

Of Reading Controversies.

WHEN we take a book into our hands, wherein any doctrine or opinion is printed in a way of argument, we are too often satisfied and determined before-hand whether it be right or wrong; and if we are on the writer's side, we are generally tempted to take his arguments for solid and substantial; and thus our own former sentiment is established more powerfully, without a sincere search after truth.

If we are on the other side of the question, we then take it for granted that there is nothing of force in these arguments, and we are satisfied with a short survey of the book, and are soon persuaded to pronounce mistake, weakness, and insufficiency concerning it. Multitudes

* Upon this it may be remarked farther, that there is a certain spirit of modesty and benevolence which never fails to adorn a writer on such occasions, and which generally does him much more service in the judgment of wise and sensible men, than any poignancy of satire with which he might be able to animate his productions; and as this always appears amiable, so is it peculiarly charming, when the opponent shews that pertness and petulancy which is so very common on such occasions. When a writer, instead of pursuing with eager resentment the antagonist that has given such provocation, calmly attends to the main question in debate, with a noble negligence of those little advantages which ill-nature and ill manners always give, he acquires a glory far superior to any trophies which wit can raise. And it is highly probable, that the solid instruction his pages may contain, will give a continuance to his writings far beyond what trash of peevish controversy are to expect, of which the much greater part are borne away into oblivion by the wind they raise, or burned in their own flames.

Multitudes of common readers, who are fallen into any error, when they are directed and advised to read a treatise that would set them right, read it with a sort of disgust which they have before entertained; they skim lightly over the arguments, they neglect or despise the force of them, and keep their own conclusion firm in their assent, and thus they maintain their error in the midst of light, and grow incapable of conviction.

But if we would indeed act like sincere searchers for the truth, we should survey every argument with a careful and unbiassed mind, whether it agree with our former opinion or no: we should give every reasoning its full force, and weigh it in our sedatest judgment. Now the best way to try what force there is in the arguments which are brought against our own opinions is, to sit down and endeavour to give a solid answer, one by one, to every argument that the author brings to support his own doctrine: and in this attempt, if we find there some arguments which we are not able to answer fairly to our own minds, we should then begin to bethink ourselves, whether we have not been hitherto in a mistake, and whether the defender of the contrary sentiments may not be in the right. Such a method as this will effectually forbid us to pronounce at once against those doctrines, and those writers, which are contrary to our sentiments; and we shall endeavour to find solid arguments to refute their positions, before we entirely establish ourselves in a contrary opinion.

Volatilis had given himself up to the conversation of the free-thinkers of our age upon all subjects; and being pleased with the wit and appearance of argument, in some of our modern Deists, had too easily deserted the Christian faith, and gone over to the camp of the infidels. Among other books which were recommended to him, to reduce him to the faith of the gospel, he had Mr John Reynolds's three Letters to a Deist put into his hands, and was particularly desired to peruse the third of them with the utmost care, as being an unanswerable defence of the truth of Christianity. He took it in hand, and after having given

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it a ſhort ſurvey, he told his friend he ſaw nothing in it but the common arguments which we all uſe to ſupport the religion in which we have been educated, but they wrought no conviction in him; nor did he ſee ſufficient reaſon to believe that the goſpel of Chriſt was not a piece of enthuſiaſm, or a mere impoſture.

Upon this the friend who recommended Mr Reynolds's three Letters to his ſtudy, being confident of the force of truth which lay there, entreated of Volatilis that he would ſet himſelf down with diligence, and try to anſwer Mr Reynolds's third Letter in vindication of the goſpel; and that he would ſhow, under every head, how the ſeveral ſteps which were taken in the propagation of the Chriſtian religion might be the natural effects of impoſture or enthuſiaſm; and conſequently, that it deſerves no credit among men.

Volatilis undertook the work, and after he had entered a little way into it, found himſelf ſo bewildered, and his arguments to prove the apoſtles either enthuſiaſts or impoſtors ſo muddled, ſo perplexed, and ſo inconcluſive, that by a diligent review of this letter to the Deiſt, at laſt he acknowledged himſelf fully convinced that the religion of Jeſus was divine; for that Chriſtian author had made it appear, it was impoſſible that doctrine ſhould have been propagated in the world by ſimplicity or folly, by fraud or falſehood; and accordingly, reſigned his ſoul up to the goſpel of the bleſſed Jeſus.

I fear there have been multitudes of ſuch unbelievers as Volatilis; and he himſelf has confeſſed to me, that even his moſt rational friends would be conſtrained to yield to the evidence of the Chriſtian doctrine, if they would honeſtly try the ſame method.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

Education of Children and Youth.

A

DISCOURSE, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

Of the Importance of Education, and the Design of this Diſcourſe, with a Plan of it.

THE children of the preſent age are the hope of the age to come. We who are now acting our ſeveral parts in the buſy ſcenes of life, are haſting off the ſtage apace: months and days are ſweeping us away from the buſineſs and the ſurface of this earth, and continually laying ſome of us to ſleep under ground. The circle of thirty years will plant another generation in our room: another ſet of mortals will be the chief actors in all the greater and leſſer affairs of this life, and will fill the world with bleſſings or with miſchiefs, when our heads lie low in the duſt.

Shall we not then conſider with ourſelves, what can we do now to prevent thoſe miſchiefs, and to entail bleſſings on our ſucceſſors? What ſhall we do to ſecure wiſdom, goodneſs, and religion, among the next generation of men? Have we any concern for the glory of God in the riſing age? any ſolicitude for the propagation of virtue and happineſs to thoſe who ſhall ſtand up in our ſtead? Let us then hearken to the voice of GOD and Solomon, and we ſhall learn how this may be done: the all-wiſe God, and the wiſeſt of men, join to give us this advice: "Train up a child in the way that he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The ſenſe of it may be expreſſed at more large in this propoſition, namely, Let children have a good education given them in the younger parts of life, and this is the moſt likely way to eſtabliſh them in virtue and piety in their elder years.

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In this diſcourſe, I ſhall not enter into any inquiries about the management of children in the two or three firſt years of their life; I leave that tender age entirely to the care of the mother and the nurſe; yet not without a wiſh, that ſome wiſer and happier pen would give advice or friendly notice to nurſes and mothers, of what they ought to avoid, and what they ought to do in thoſe early ſeaſons: and indeed, they may do much towards the future welfare of thoſe young buds and bloſſoms, thoſe leſſer pieces of human nature, which are their proper charge. Some of the ſeeds of virtue and goodneſs may be conveyed almoſt into their very conſtitution betimes, by the pious prudence of thoſe who have the conduct of them: and ſome forward vices may be nipped in the very bud, which in three years time might gain too firm a root in their heart and practice, and may not eaſily be plucked up by all the following care of their teachers.

But I begin with children when they can walk and talk, when they have learned their mother-tongue, when they begin to give ſome more evident diſcoveries of their intellectual powers, and are more manifeſtly capable of having their minds formed and moulded into knowledge, virtue and piety.

Now the firſt and moſt univerſal ingredient which enters into the education of children, is an inſtruction of them in thoſe things which are neceſſary and uſeful for them in their rank and ſtation, and that with regard to this world and the world to come.

I limit theſe inſtructions (eſpecially ſuch as relate to this world) by the ſtation and rank of life in which children are born and placed by the providence of God. Perſons of better circumſtances in the world ſhould give their ſons and their daughters a much larger ſhare of knowledge, and a richer variety of inſtruction, than meaner perſons can or ought. But ſince every child that is born into this world hath a body and a ſoul, ſince its happineſs or miſery in this world and the next depends very much upon its inſtructions and knowledge, it hath a right to be taught by its parents, according to their beſt ability, ſo much as

as is neceſſary for its well-being, both in ſoul and body, here and hereafter.

It is true, that the great God our Creator hath made us reaſonable creatures: we are by nature capable of learning a million of objects: but as the ſoul comes into the world, it is unfurniſhed with knowledge; we are born ignorant of every good and uſeful thing: we know not God, we know not ourſelves, we know not what is our duty and our intereſt, nor where lies our danger; and, if left entirely to ourſelves, ſhould probably grow up like the brutes of the earth; we ſhould trifle away the brighter ſeaſons of life in a thouſand crimes and follies, and endure the fatigues and burdens of it, ſurrounded with a thouſand miſeries; and at laſt we ſhould periſh and die without knowledge or hope, if we had no inſtructors.

All our other powers of nature, ſuch as the will and the various affections, the ſenſes, the appetites, and the limbs, would become wild inſtruments of madneſs and miſchief, if not governed by the underſtanding: and the underſtanding itſelf would run into a thouſand errors, dreadful and pernicious, and would employ all the other powers in miſchief and madneſs, if it hath not the happineſs to be inſtructed in the things of God and men. And who is there among all our fellow-creatures ſo much obliged to beſtow this inſtruction on us, as the perſons who, by divine providence, have been the inſtruments to bring us into life and being? It is their duty to give their young offſpring this benefit of inſtruction, as far as they are able; or at leaſt to provide ſuch inſtructions for them, and to put the children under their care.

Here let us therefore inquire, what are the ſeveral things in which children ſhould be inſtructed? And upon a due ſurvey, we ſhall find the moſt important things which children ought to learn and know are theſe which follow.

SECT. I.

Of inſtructing Children in Religion.

RELIGION, in all the parts of it, both what they are to believe, and what they are to practiſe, is moſt neceſſary to be taught. I mention this in the firſt place, not only becauſe it is a matter of the higheſt importance, and of moſt univerſal concern to all mankind, but becauſe it may be taught even in theſe very early years of life. As ſoon as children begin to know almoſt any thing, and to exerciſe their reaſon about matters that lie within the reach of their knowledge, they may be brought to know ſo much of religion as is neceſſary for their age and ſtate. For inſtance,

1. Young children may be taught that there is a God, a great and almighty God who made them, and who gives them very good thing. That he ſees them every where, though they cannot ſee him; and that he takes notice of all their behaviour.

2. They muſt be told what they ſhould do, and what they ſhould avoid, in order to pleaſe God. They ſhould be taught in general to know the difference between good and evil. They may learn, that it is their duty to fear, and love, and worſhip God, to pray to him for what they want, and to praiſe him for what they enjoy; to obey their parents, to ſpeak truth, and to be honeſt and friendly to all mankind; and to ſet a guard upon their own appetites and paſſions. And that to neglect theſe things, or to do any thing contrary to them, is ſinful in the ſight of God.

3. Their conſciences are capable of receiving conviction when they have neglected theſe duties, or broken the commands of God or of their parents; and they may be made ſenſible that the great and holy God, who loves the righteous, and beſtows bleſſings upon them, is angry with thoſe who have broken his commands and ſinned againſt him; and therefore that they themſelves are become ſubject to his diſpleaſure.

4. They may be told, that there is another world after this; and that their ſouls do not die when their bodies

bodies die: that they ſhall be taken up into heaven, which is a ſtate of pleaſure and happineſs, if they have been good and holy in this world; but if they have been wicked children, they muſt go down to hell, which is a ſtate of miſery and torment.

5. You may alſo inform them, that though their bodies die and are buried, yet God can and will raiſe them to life again; and that their body and ſoul together muſt be made happy or miſerable according to their behaviour in this life.

6. They may be taught, that there is no way for ſuch ſinful creatures as we are to be received into God's favour, but for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God; who came down from heaven into our world, and lived a life of pure and perfect holineſs, and ſuffered death to reconcile ſinners to the great and holy God, who is offended by the ſins of men; and now he lives in heaven to plead for mercy for them; and that as this Jeſus Chriſt is the only reconciler between God and man, ſo all their hope muſt be placed in him.

7. They may be taught, that their very natures are ſinful: that may be convinced, that they are inclined naturally to do evil: and they ſhould be informed, that it is the holy Spirit of God who muſt cure the evil temper of their own ſpirits, and make them holy and fit to dwell with God in heaven.

8. They ſhould alſo be inſtructed to pray to God, that for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, the great Mediator or Reconciler, he would pardon their ſins paſt, and help them by his Spirit to love and ſerve him with zeal and faithfulneſs for the time to come: that he would beſtow all neceſſary bleſſings upon them in this world, and bring them ſafe at laſt to his heavenly kingdom.

9. In the laſt place, they ſhould be informed, that our bleſſed Saviour has appointed two ordinances to be obſerved by all his followers to the end of the world, which are uſually called ſacraments.

The one is baptiſm, wherein perſons are to be waſhed with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, to ſignify their being given up to Chriſt as his diſciples, or profeſſors of Chriſtianity;

and as an emblem of that purity of heart and life, which, as ſuch, they muſt aim at and endeavour after.

The other is the Lord's ſupper, wherein bread is broken and wine is poured out, and diſtributed, to be eaten and drank by Chriſtians in remembrance of the body of Chriſt, which was put to a bloody death, as a ſacrifice to obtain pardon for the ſins of men.

The firſt of theſe, namely, baptiſm, is but once to be adminiſtered to any perſon; but the laſt, namely, the Lord's ſupper, is to be frequently performed, to keep us always in mind of the death of Chriſt, till he comes again from heaven to judge the world.

This is the ſum and ſubſtance of the Chriſtian religion, drawn out into a very few plain articles; and I think a child of common capacity, who is arrived at three or four years of age, may be taught ſome part of theſe articles, and may learn to underſtand them all at ſeven, or eight, or nine; at leaſt ſo far as is needful, for all his own exerciſes of devotion and piety. As his age increaſes, he may be inſtructed more at large in the principles and practices of our holy religion, as I ſhall ſhew more particularly in the third ſection.

SECT. II.

The Exerciſe and improvement of their natural Powers.

HAVING mentioned religion as the principal thing in which children ſhould be inſtructed, I proceed to ſay, in the ſecond place, that children ſhould be taught the true uſe, the exerciſe, and improvement of their natural powers: and we may for order ſake diſtinguiſh theſe into the powers of the body, and thoſe of the mind: now, though nature gives theſe powers and faculties, yet it is a good education that muſt inſtruct us in the exerciſe and improvement of them: otherwiſe, like an uncultivated field, they will be ever barren and fruitleſs, or produce weeds and briers, inſtead of herbs and corn.

Among the powers of the mind which are to be thus cultivated, we may reckon the underſtanding, the memory,

mory, the judgment, the faculty of reaſoning, and the conſcience.

1. Teach them to uſe their underſtanding aright. Perſuade them to value their underſtanding as a noble faculty, and allure them to ſeek after the enrichment of it with a variety of knowledge. Let no day eſcape without adding ſome new ideas to their underſtanding, and giving their young unfurniſhed minds ſome further notion of things.

Almoſt every thing is new to a child, and novelty will entice them onward to new acquiſitions: ſhew them the birds, the beaſts, the fiſhes, and inſects, trees, herbs, fruits, and all the ſeveral parts and properties of the vegetable and the animal world: teach them to obſerve the various occurrences in nature and providence, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, the day and night, ſummer and winter, the clouds and the ſky, the hail, ſnow, and ice, winds, fire, water, earth, air, fields, woods, mountains, rivers, &c. Teach them that the great God made all theſe things, and his providence governs them all. Acquaint a child alſo with domeſtic affairs ſo far as is needful, and with the things that belong to the civil and the military life, the church and the ſtate, with the works of God and the works of men. A thouſand objects that ſtrike their eyes, their ears, and all their ſenſes, will furniſh out new matter for their curioſity and your inſtructions.

There are ſome books which are publiſhed in the world, wherein a child may be delightfully led into the knowledge of a great number of theſe things by pictures, or figures of birds, beaſts, &c. well graven, with their names under them: this will much aſſiſt the labour of the teacher, and add to the pleaſure of children in their daily learning.

You who inſtruct them ſhould allure their young curioſity to aſk many queſtions, encourage them in it, and gratify their inquiries, by giving them the beſt and moſt ſatisfactory anſwers you can frame, and accommodate all your language to their capacity.

Give them, as far as poſſible, clear ideas of things, and teach them how to diſtinguiſh one thing from another by their different appearances, by their different

properties, and by their different effects. Shew them how far ſome things agree with others, and how far they differ from them; and above all things teach them, as far as their young underſtanding will admit, to diſtinguiſh between appearances and realities, between truth and falſehood, between good and evil, between trifles and things of importance; for theſe are the moſt valuable pieces of knowledge and diſtinction which can be lodged in the young underſtandings of children.

2. The memory is another faculty of the ſoul which ſhould be cultivated and improved: endeavour carefully to impreſs on their minds things of worth and value. Such are, ſhort and uſeful and entertaining ſtories, which carry in them ſome virtue recommended, ſome vice ridiculed or puniſhed; various human and divine truths, rules of piety and virtue, precepts of prudence, &c. Repeat theſe things often to them by day and by night; teach them theſe things in verſe and in proſe; rehearſe them in their ears at all proper ſeaſons, and take occaſion to make them repeat theſe things to you.

Be ſolicitous to know what it is they learn when they are out of your ſight, and take good care that their memories be not charged with trifles and idle trumpery. The memory is a noble repoſitory or cabinet of the ſoul; it ſhould not be filled with rubbiſh and lumber. Silly tales and fooliſh ſongs, the conundrums of nurſes, and the dull rhimes that are ſung to lull children aſleep, or to ſooth a froward humour, ſhould be generally forbidden to entertain thoſe children where a good education is deſigned. Something more innocent, more ſolid and profitable, may be invented inſtead of theſe fooleries. If it were poſſible, let a very few things be lodged in the memory of children which they need to forget when they are men.

The way to ſtrengthen and improve the memory, is to put it upon daily exerciſe. I do not mean that young children ſhould be kept ſo cloſe to their book as to be crammed with leſſons all the day long, and made to receive and ſuſtain a heavy load every hour. The powers of the ſoul (eſpecially ſuch as act in cloſe concert

concert with the body, and are ſo much aided by the brain) may be over-burdened, and injured, as well as the limbs: the mind may be perplexed and confounded, the head may be overſtrained and weakened, and the health impaired in thoſe tender years of life, by an exceſſive impoſition on the memory: the teachers of children ſhould have ſome prudence, to diſtinguiſh their ages and their ſeveral capacities: they ſhould know how to avoid extremes.

But in general it may be ſaid, that the powers of the mind, as well as thoſe of the body, grow ſtronger by a conſtant and moderate exerciſe. Every day let the memory of a child be entruſted with ſomething new: every day let ſome leſſon be learned: and every Lord's-day at leaſt, even in their youngeſt years, let them learn by heart ſome one text of ſcripture (chiefly that on which the miniſter preaches): this will grow up in time to a conſiderable treaſure of ſcriptural knowledge, which will be of unſpeakable uſe to them in the Chriſtian life. I have known children, who from their early years have been conſtantly trained up and taught to remember a few ſentences of a ſermon beſides the text, and by this means have grown up by degrees to know all the diſtinct parts and branches of a diſcourſe, and in time to write down half the ſermon after they came home, to their own conſolation, and the improvement of their friends: whereas thoſe who have been never taught to uſe their memories in their younger parts of life, loſe every thing from their thoughts when it is paſt off from their ears, and come home from noble and edifying diſcourſes, pleaſed (it may be) with the tranſient ſound, and commending the preacher, but uninſtructed, unimproved, without any growth in knowledge or piety.

3. The judgment is another natural power of the mind, which ſhould be exerciſed and improved in children. They ſhould be taught to paſs no judgment on men or things raſhly or ſuddenly, but to withhold their judgment till they ſee ſufficient reaſon to determine them. To this end, ſhew them, in little common inſtances, how often they are deceived when they judge on a ſudden, without due conſideration, and how often they

they are forced to change their opinions. Put them in mind how ſoon they have found themſelves miſtaken, when they have given their opinions too haſtily. This will make them cautious, and afraid of being ſo raſh, either in praiſing one thing or in condemning another.

Teach them to judge, not merely by outward ſhew and appearance, but by ſearching things to the bottom. Convince them that every man who hath fine clothes is not rich, and that every man who talks hard words is not wiſe or learned; and that every one who wears a red coat is not a ſoldier; nor is every perſon good-humoured who ſpeaks very complaiſant things in company. Take frequent occaſion to ſhew them how much they will be miſtaken if they judge immediately by outward appearances of things.

Tell them, that they muſt not judge of things by cuſtom, nor by the common opinions of the multitude, nor by the practices of the rich and the great; for all theſe things may deceive them: but that they muſt judge of things merely by reaſon, except in matters of religion, and there they muſt judge rather by ſcripture or the word of God. Let them know, that cuſtoms change and alter, and the cuſtoms of one age or of one nation differ greatly from thoſe of another; but that the nature and the reaſon of things is ſtill the ſame, and that ſcripture is the conſtant and unchangeable rule of our religion.

To confirm this, let them be informed that it was the cuſtom of our anceſtors in England, and it is now the cuſtom in France and Spain, to ſay their prayers in Latin, and to worſhip images: but it is a ſinful cuſtom, though the multitudes of the common people agree in it, and though the great and the rich practiſe it alſo. Nor is our preſent cuſtom in Great Britain, of praying in Engliſh, and worſhipping no images, to be eſteemed the right way of worſhip, becauſe it is the cuſtom of the nation, but becauſe it is agreeable to the word of God, which forbids us to worſhip images, or to pray in an unknown tongue.

Take every occaſion to guard them againſt prejudices, and paſſing a judgment on men or things upon inſufficient grounds.



4. The

4. The reaſoning powers of the mind ſhould be cultivated and improved in children. This is very near akin to the former, and therefore I ſhall be very brief here.

Whenſoever children give you their opinion of any thing, aſk them to give you alſo the reaſon whey they are of that opinion: whenſoever they deſire or wiſh for any thing, or ſhew an averſion to it, when they have done any thing of their own will, aſk them the reaſon why they did it. And when you do any thing that is for their good, ſhew them the reaſon why you do it, and convince them that it was fit and neceſſary to be done, though perhaps it was not ſo pleaſing to them.

By calling their young reaſon thus into exerciſe, you will teach them wiſdom betimes: you will awaken manly thoughts within them, and ſoon lead them to a rational and manly conduct in their childiſh years: by this means alſo you will always have a handle to take hold of, in order to perſuade them to their duty, and to ſave them from miſchief. But if their reaſoning powers be neglected, you will train them up like the horſe and the mule who have no underſtanding: they will grow like brutes in the ſhape of men, and reaſon will have but little power over them in the following parts of life.

5. Conſcience is another natural power of the ſoul, wherein the principles of virtue and rules of duty to God and man are to be laid up: it is ſomething within us that calls us to account for our faults, and by which we paſs a judgment concerning ourſelves and all our actions.

Children have a conſcience within them, and it ſhould be awakened early to its duty. They ſhould be taught to reflect and look back upon their own behaviour, to call themſelves often to account, to compare their deeds with thoſe good rules and principles laid up in their minds, and to ſee how far they have complied with them, and how far they have neglected them. Parents ſhould teach their children to pay a religious reſpect to the inward dictates of virtue within them, to examine their actions continually by the light of their

own

own conſciences, and to rejoice when they can approve themſelves to their own minds, that they have acted well according to the beſt of their knowledge: they ought alſo to attend to the inward reproofs of conſcience, and mourn, and be aſhamed, and repent when they have ſinned againſt their light. It is of admirable uſe toward all the practices of religion and every virtue, to have conſcience well ſtored with good principles, and to be always kept tender and watchful; it is proper that children ſhould learn to reverence and obey this inward monitor betimes, that every wilful ſin may give their conſciences a ſenſible pain and uneaſineſs, and that they may be diſpoſed to ſacrifice every thing elſe to conſideration of conſcience, and to endure any extremities, rather than act contrary to it.

I proceed in the next place to conſider the ſeveral powers of the body which ought to be regulated and managed by the due inſtruction of children in their younger years. Now, as the God of nature has given children eyes, and tongues, and feet, and arms, and hands, it is expedient that parents ſhould teach their children the proper uſe of them.

1. The God of nature hath given them eyes. Let their parents teach them to uſe theſe eyes aright. Would it be amiſs in me here to give a hint or two of this kind? May not children be warned againſt a ſtaring look, againſt ſtretching their eye-lids into a glare of wildneſs? may they not be forbid to look aſide on any object in a ſquinting manner, when their faces are turned another way? ſhould they not be inſtructed to look directly with their face turned to the thing they look at? May they not be taught with due courage to look in the face of the perſon they ſpeak to, yet with an humble modeſt aſpect, as befits a child? A becoming courage and a becoming modeſty dwell much in the eye.

Some children ſhould be often admoniſhed to lay aſide a gloomy and a frowning look, a ſcowling air, an uneaſy and forbidding aſpect. They ſhould be taught to ſmooth the ruffles of their brow, and put on a lively, pleaſing, and cheerful countenance among their friends:

friends: ſome there are who have all theſe graces by nature, but thoſe who have them not may be corrected and ſoftened by the care of parents in younger years*.

2. Let parents teach children to uſe their tongues properly and agreeably; not only to ſpeak, but to pronounce their words plain and diſtinct. Let them be inſtructed to keep due and proper diſtances between their words and ſentences, and not ſpeak in a ſwift hurry, with a tumult of ſyllables and clutter upon their lips, which will ſound like a foreign gibberiſh, and never be underſtood. Nor ſhould they drawl out their words in a ſlow long tone, which is equally ungraceful and diſagreeable.

There are two other common faults in ſpeaking, and where they are found they ſhould be corrected early in children.

The one is liſping, which is a pronunciation of the letter S or Z, or C before E and I, as though it were TH. Thus, inſtead of ſpice they cry *thpithe*, inſtead of ceaſe they ſay *theathe*. This may be cured by teaching them to pronounce a few ſuch words as theſe, where the ſound of the letter S prevails, with their teeth ſhut cloſe; and by forbidding them to put their tongue between their teeth at any time, except when *th* is to be pronounced.

The other fault is ſtammering, which I ſuppoſe may be commonly prevented or cured by teaching children not to ſpeak much, and to ſpeak ſlow always; and they ſhould be warned againſt all anger or haſtineſs, or eagerneſs of ſpirit; for ſuch a temper will throw out their words faſter than the organs of ſpeech can accommodate themſelves to form the ſyllables, and thus bring a hurry and confuſion into their ſpeech; and they ſhould alſo gain a good degree of courage or becoming aſſurance, and not ſpeak with much concern or

* It may here be recollected by the way, that a gloominess of aſpect does not always ariſe from a malignity of temper, but ſometimes from fear of diſpleaſing and incurring reproof; and is therefore often to be removed by ſpeaking kindly to children, and encouraging them with expreſſions of candour and tenderneſs. To know how in ſuch caſes to divert a child, and make him cheerful and happy in the company of a parent, is none of the leaſt important cares of education.

or fear; for fear will ſtop the organs of ſpeech, and hinder the formation of words.

But I inſiſt no longer on the uſe of the tongue in ſpeaking.

3. As God hath given them feet, let parents teach them to ſtand firm and ſtrong, and to walk in a becoming and decent manner, without waddling from ſide to ſide, without turning either or both of their feet inward, without little jerks in their motion, or long ſtrides, or any of thoſe awkwardneſſes which continue with many perſons to old age, for want of having theſe irregularities corrected when they were young. Children ſhould be indulged in their ſports, ſometimes in running ſwiftly, and in leaping, where there is no danger, in order to exerciſe their limbs, and make them pliant and nimble, ſtrong and active on all occaſions.

As to their arms and hands, they were formed, not to lie folded in the boſom, but to be engaged in ſome uſeful work; and ſometimes, with due moderation, in robuſt and hardy exerciſe and toil; not ſo as to overſtrain their joints, but to acquire firmneſs of ſtrength by exerciſe.

And more eſpecially, they who are to get their bread by their hands, ſhould be inured to toilſome and vigorous labours almoſt from their infancy: they ſhould be accuſtomed to work in heat and cold, and to bear rougher exerciſes and fatigues of body, that they may be fit to endure hardſhips, and go through thoſe difficulties which their ſtation of life may call them to, without any injury or inconveniency. And it is deſirable, that the ſons of all families ſhould be in ſome degree inured to ſuch difficulties as theſe, which men of all ranks are ſometimes called to encounter.

If ſome fond and tender mothers had brought up their children in this hardy manner, they had not now, in all human probability, been mourning over their graves. In their younger years, they would ſcarcely let them ſet the ſole of their foot to the ground, nor ſuffer the wind to blow upon them: thus they grew up in a ſtate of tenderneſs and infirmity, ſickly and feeble creatures; a ſudden heat or a cold ſeized them; their natures, which were never accuſtomed to bear

hardſhip, were unable to reſiſt the enemy; a fever kindled in their blood, or a catarrh or cough injured their lungs, and early buried their parents hopes in the duſt.

Thus I have finiſhed the ſecond general head of inſtruction, that is, children ſhould be inſtructed to exerciſe and improve their natural powers, both of mind and body; and this is one neceſſary part of a good education, which parents and other teachers ſhould attend betimes.

SECT. III.

Self-Government.

CHILDREN ſhould be inſtructed in the art of ſelf-government. They ſhould be taught (as far as poſſible) to govern their thoughts: to uſe their wills to be determined by the light of their underſtandings, and not by head-ſtrong and fooliſh humour; they ſhould learn to keep the lower powers of nature under the command of their reaſon; they ſhould be inſtructed to regulate their ſenſes, their imagination, their appetites, and their paſſions. Let it be obſerved that I ſpeak of theſe things in this place, not as a part of religion, though they are an important part of it, but give it as a direction exceedingly uſeful to all the purpoſes of human life in this world.

1. Their thoughts and fancies ſhould be brought under early government. Children ſhould be taught, as far as poſſible, to keep their thoughts and attention fixed upon what is their proper buſineſs; and to withhold them from roving and wandering away from the work in which they are engaged. Many children have ſuch wild fluttering fancies, that they will not be eaſily confined to fix upon one object for any conſiderable time: every flying feather, every motion of any perſon or thing that is near them, every ſound, or noiſe, or ſhadow, calls them away from their duty. When they ſhould employ their eyes on their book or their work, they will be gazing at every thing beſides their taſk;

they muſt riſe often to the window to ſee what paſſes abroad, when their buſineſs lies within.

This volatile humour, if not gently altered and wiſely corrected in early years, will have an unhappy influence to hinder them for ever from attaining any great excellence in whatſoever buſineſs they undertake. Children ſhould be taught therefore to call in their wandering thoughts, and bind them to the work in hand, till they have gone through it and finiſhed it.

Yet this ſort of wandering folly ſhould not be chaſtized ſeverely in young children, nor ſhould it be ſubdued with violence, by too cloſe and rigorous a confinement to many long hours of labour or ſtudy, in that early and tender part of life; ſuch a conduct might break or overwelm an active and ſprightly genius, and deſtroy all thoſe ſeeds of curioſity which promiſe well for maturer years: but proper and agreeable methods ſhould be uſed to perſuade and incline the young learner to attend to his preſent employment. It is far better to fix the thoughts to duty by allurement than by ſeverity; but ſome way or other it ought to be endeavoured, at leaſt in a good degree.

This fixedneſs of the mind and active powers, is not only of great ſerve to attain uſeful knowledge, or to learn any buſineſs in common life, but it is of conſiderable advantage in religion, in attendance on divine worſhip, either prayer, preaching, or meditation; where the mind is ſubject to a thouſand diſtractions, for want of being taught to fix the attention in younger years. Perſons who have well learned the art of governing their thoughts, can purſue a train of thinking while they walk through the ſtreets of London, nor will the noiſe and hurry of that buſy place break the thread of their meditations. A happy attainment this, and a felicity which but few arrive at!

2. Children ſhould be alſo inſtructed to govern their inclinations and wiſhes, and to determine their wills and their choice of things, not by humour and wild fancy, but by the dictates of reaſon. Some perſons, even in their mature years, can give no other account why they chooſe and determine to do this or that, but becauſe they have a fancy for it, and they will do it. I will

becauſe

becauſe I will, ſerves inſtead of all other reaſons. And in the ſame manner they manage their refuſal or diſlike of any thing. I hate to do this thing; I will not go to this place, nor do that work; I am reſolved againſt it; and all from mere humour. This is a conduct very unbecoming a reaſonable creature; and this folly ſhould be corrected betimes, in our early parts of life, ſince God has given us underſtanding and reaſon to be the guide of our reſolutions, and to direct our choice and all our actions.

3. Appetite is another thing which ſhould be put under ſtrict government, and children ſhould be taught betimes to reſtrain it. That of the taſte is the firſt thing that gets the aſcendant in our younger ears, and a guard ſhould be ſet upon it early. What an unbecoming thing is it for children to be craving after every diſh that comes to a table? and that they will generally do, if they have never been taught to bridle their craving. They muſt eat of all the pickles and ſauces and high-ſeaſoned meats, and gorge themſelves with a medley of inconſiſtent dainties; and without any reſtraint, leſt little maſter ſhould be froward, or leſt little miſs ſhould grow out of humour with her dinner. How often do they make a foul inroad on their health by exceſs of eating, being tempted farther than nature requires by every luſcious bit which is within their ſight? how frequently doth this indulgence vitiate their ſtomach, ruin their conſtitution, weaken the ſprings of nature, and deſtroy the powers of animal life betimes? how many graves are filled, and funeral vaults crowded with little carcaſes which have been brought to untimely death by the fooliſh fondneſs of a parent or a nurſe giving the young creatures leave to eat every thing they deſire? or if they happen by ſtrength of conſtitution to ſurvive this peſtilence, how often do they grow up young gluttons, and place their happineſs in the ſatisfaction of the taſte? they are deaf to all the rules of virtue and abſtinence all their lives, becauſe they were never taught to deny themſelves when they were young. O it is a mean and ſhameful thing to be a ſlave to our taſte, and to let this brutal appetite ſubdue reaſon and govern the man! But if appetites

muſt be gratified in the child, they will grow ſtrong in the years of youth, and a thouſand to one but they overpower the man alſo.

Let but fond parents humour their little offspring, and indulge their children to ſip wine frequently, and they will generally grow up to the love of it long before nature needs it; and by this means they will imagine drams are daily neceſſary for their ſupport, by that time they are arrived at the age of man or woman. Thus nature is ſoon burnt up, and life pays for the deadly draught. The foundation of much gluttony and drunkenneſs, of many diſeaſes that ariſe from intemperence, and of many an untimely death, is laid in the nurſery.

An exceſs of niceneſs in pleaſing the palate is a fooliſh and dangerous humour, which ſhould never be encouraged by parents, ſince the plaineſt food is moſt healthful for all perſons, but eſpecially for children; and in this reſpect they ſhould be under the conduct of their elders, and not always chooſe for themſelves. This conduct and diſcipline will train them up to virtue and ſelf-denial, to temperance and frugality, to a reliſh of plain and wholeſome food, to the pleaſures of active health, and to a firm and cheerful old age.

The indulgence of a nice appetite in children, is not only the reaſon why they are ſo often ſick, but at the ſame time it makes them ſo humorous and ſqueamiſh, that they can ſcarcely be perſuaded to ſwallow a medicine which is neceſſary for their recovery. What a long, tedious, and tireſome buſineſs is it to wait on ſome children whole hours together, while all the ſoft perſuaſions and flatteries of a mother cannot prevail with them to take a nauſeous ſpoonful, or a bitter bolus, though their life may ſeem to depend on it? They have been taught to make an idol of their taſte, and even in the view and peril of death, they can hardly be perſuaded to affront their idol, and diſpleaſe their palate with a draught, or even a pill, which diſguſts it.

There are other appetites (if I may ſo call them) beſide that of the taſte, which children are ready to indulge too far, if not limited and corrected by the wiſdom

dom of their parents. Their eyes are never ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor their ears with hearing. Some young perſons cannot hear of a fine ſhow but they muſt needs ſee it; nor can they be told of a concert of muſic, but they muſt needs hear it, though it creates an expence beyond their circumſtances, and may endanger their health or their virtue.

I confeſs freely, that I would recommend the ſight of uncommon things in nature or art, in government civil or military, to the curioſity of youth. If ſome ſtrange wild beaſts and birds are to be ſhown, if lions and eagles, oſtriches and elephants, pelicans or rhinoceroſes, are brought into our land, if an ingenious model of Solomon's temple, or ſome nice and admirable clock-work, engines, or moving pictures, &c. be made a ſpectacle to the ingenious; if a king be crowned, or a public triumph proceed through the ſtreets; when an army is reviewed by a prince, when an ambaſſador makes a public entry, or when there is a public trial of criminals before a judge, I will readily allow theſe ſights are worthy of the attendance of the younger parts of mankind; once at leaſt, where it may be done with ſafety, and without too great hazard or expence. Moſt of theſe are things which are not often repeated, and it is fit that the curioſity of the eyes ſhould be ſo far gratified, as to give people once in their lives an opportunity of knowing what theſe things are, that their minds may be furniſhed with uſeful ideas of the world of nature or art, and with ſome notion of the great and uncommon ſcenes and appearances of the civil life. But for children to haunt every public ſpectacle, to attend with conſtancy every lord mayor's ſhow, to ſeize every opportunity of repeating theſe ſights, ſuffering nothing to eſcape them that may pleaſe their ſenſes, and this too often without any regard to their religion, their virtue, or their health, this is a vanity which ought to be reſtrained by thoſe to whom God and nature hath committed the care of their inſtruction, and who have a juſt and natural authority over them. But of this, and ſome other ſubjects akin to it, I may have occaſion to ſpeak more in the following

parts of this diſcourſe, when I profeſſedly treat on the article of reſtraint.

Thus I have ſhown how the appetites and inclinations of children ſhould be put under diſcipline, and how they may be taught ſelf-government in this reſpect.

4. The paſſions or affections are the laſt thing which I ſhall mention: theſe appear very early in children to want a regulation and government. They love and hate too raſhly, and with too much vehemence; they grieve and rejoice too violently and on the ſudden, and that for mere trifles; their hopes and fears, their deſires and their averſions, are preſently raiſed to too high a pitch, and upon very ſlight and inſufficient grounds. It becomes a wiſe parent to watch over theſe young emotions of their ſouls, and put in a word of prudent caution, as often as they obſerve theſe irregularities.

Let children be taught early, that the little things for which they are ſo zealous, for which they grieve or rejoice ſo impetuouſly, are not worthy of theſe affections of their ſouls; ſhew them the folly of being ſo fond of theſe trifles, and of vexing and growing fretful for the loſs of them. Inform them what a happineſs it is to have few deſires and few averſions, for this will preſerve them from a multitude of ſorrows, and keep their temper always ſerene and calm: perſuade them never to raiſe their hopes very high of things in this world, and then they will never meet with great diſappointments. Teach them moderation in all theſe workings of their ſpirits; and inform them, that their paſſions ſhould never be laid out thus on objects which do not deſerve them, nor riſe higher than the occaſion requires.

Teach baſhful and timorous children, that they need be aſhamed of nothing but what is evil; that they ſhould fear God in the firſt place, and ſerve him, and then they need not be afraid of men, or of any thing that threatens miſchief to them; for the Almighty God will be their friend and defence. Engage their fear and their love in the firſt place on God, the moſt proper and ſupreme object of them; let their hope, their joys, and their ſorrows, as ſoon as poſſible, be tinctured with religion: ſet their young affections at

work

work on the moſt needful and important objects of them in early life, and this will have a ſweet and powerful influence on the better regulation of them with regard to all ſenſible things.

Above all, let them know that they muſt govern their anger, and not let it break out on every ſlight occaſion. It is anger that is eminently called paſſion among children, and in the language of common life. This therefore ſhould eminently have a conſtant guard ſet upon it. Shew them how unreaſonable and unmanly a thing it is to take fire at every little provocation: how honourable and glorious to forgive an injury; how much like God, and like the beſt of men. Let them know what Solomon would inform them, that the patient in ſpirit is better than the proud in ſpirit: that he who is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his ſpirit, better than he that taketh a city. Teach them to put away their little quarrels and reſentments, and to forget and bury them in love. Let them be put in mind, that though anger may happen to riſe a little in a good man, yet it reſts and abides only in the boſom of a fool; and therefore they ſhould never grow ſullen, nor let the ſun go down upon their wrath.

The occaſions of childiſh reſentment, and the riſings of anger, are ready to return often, and therefore they ſhould often have ſuch warnings given them and ſuch inſtructions repeated. Tell them how lovely a thing it is to be meek and free from paſſion, and how much ſuch children are beloved of all. Inſtruct them how much it tends to their own peace, to ſuffer nothing to ruffle and diſcompoſe them: and when their little hearts are ready to ſwell and grow big within them, and their wrath takes ſudden fire, put in ſome pretty ſoft word to cure the return of this inward ſwelling, to quench the new flame that is kindling in their boſom, and to aſſuage the riſing ſtorm. Teach them by degrees to get an habitual conqueſt over this diſorder of nature in youth, and you will lay a foundation for their deliverance from a thouſand miſchiefs in the following years and events of life.

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This ſhall ſuffice for the third head of inſtruction, which relates to ſelf-government: I have dwelt the longer upon it, becauſe it is of ſo great and evident importance towards the eaſe and happineſs of life, as well as ſo conſiderable a part of religion; and men can hardly ever get ſo ſucceſsful a victory over themſelves, unleſs they begin when they are children.

SECT. IV.

The common Arts of Reading and Writing.

THE next thing that I ſhall mention as a matter of inſtruction for children, is the common arts of reading, ſpelling, and writing.

Writing is almoſt a divine art, whereby thoughts may be communicated without a voice, and underſtood without hearing: to theſe I would add ſome ſmall knowledge of arithmatic or accounts, as the practice of it is in a manner ſo univerſal in our age, that it does almoſt neceſſarily belong to a tolerable education.

The knowledge of letters is one of the greateſt bleſſings that ever God beſtowed on the children of men: by this means, mankind are enabled to preſerve the memory of things done in their own times, and to lay up a rich treaſure of knowledge for all ſucceeding generations.

By the art of reading, we learn a thouſand things which our eyes can never ſee, and which our own thoughts would never have reached to: we are inſtructed by books in the wiſdom of ancient ages; we learn what our anceſtors have ſaid and done, and enjoy the benefit of the wiſe and judicious remarks which they have made through their whole courſe of life, without the fatigue of their long and painful experiments. By this means children may be led, in a great meaſure, into the wiſdom of old age. It is by the art of reading that we can ſit at home, and acquaint ourſelves with what has been done in the diſtant parts of the world. The hiſtories and the cuſtoms of all ages and all nations are brought, as it were, to our doors. By this art we are let into the knowledge of the affairs

fairs of the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans, their wars, their laws, and their religion: and we can tell what they did in the nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa, above a thousand years ago.

But the greatest blessing that we derive from reading, is the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, wherein God has conveyed down to us the discoveries of his wisdom, power, and grace, through many past ages; and whereby we attain the knowledge of Christ, and of the way of salvation by a Mediator.

It must be confessed, that, in former ages, before printing was invented, the art of reading was not so common even in polite nations, because books were much more costly, since they must be all written with a pen, and were therefore hardly to be obtained by the bulk of mankind: but since the providence of God has brought printing into the world, and knowledge is so plentifully diffused through our nation at so cheap a rate, it is a pity that any children should be born and brought up in Great Britain without the skill of reading; and especially since by this means every one may see with his own eyes what God requires of him in order to eternal happiness.

The art of writing also is so exceedingly useful, and is now grown so very common, that the greatest part of children may attain it at an easy rate: by this means we communicate our thoughts and all our affairs to our friends at ever so great a distance: we tell them our wants, our sorrows, and our joys, and interest them in our concerns, as though they were near us. We maintain correspondence and traffic with persons in distant nations, and the wealth and grandeur of Great Britain is maintained by this means. By the art of writing, we treasure up all things that concern us in a safe repository; and as often as we please, by consulting our paper records, we renew our remembrance of things that relate to this life or the life to come: and why should any of the children of men be debarred from this privilege, if it may be attained at a cheap and easy rate, without entrenching upon other duties of life, and without omitting any more necessary business that may belong to their stations.

I might add here alſo, true ſpelling is ſuch a part of knowledge as children ought to be acquainted with, ſince it is a matter of ſhame and ridicule in ſo polite an age as ours, when perſons who have learned to handle the pen cannot write three words together without a miſtake or blunder; and when they put letters together in ſuch an aukward and ignorant manner; that it is hard to make ſenſe of them, or to tell what they mean.

Arithmetic, or the art of numbers, is, as was obſerved before, to be reckoned alſo a neceſſary part of a good education. Without ſome degrees of this knowledge, there is indeed no traffic among men. And eſpecially is it more needful at preſent, ſince the world deals much more upon truſt and credit than it did in former times; and therefore the art of keeping accounts is made, in ſome meaſure, neceſſary to perſons even in meaner ſtations of life, below the rank of merchants or great traders. A little knowledge of the art of accounts is alſo needful, in ſome degree, in order to take a true ſurvey, and make a juſt judgment of the common expences of a perſon or a family: but this part of learning, in the various degrees of it, is more or leſs uſeful and needful, according to the different ſtations and buſineſſes for which children are deſigned.

As the ſons of a family ſhould be educated in the knowledge of writing, reading, ſpelling, and accounts, ſo neither ſhould the daughters be trained up without them. Reading is as needful for one ſex as the other: or ſhould girls be forbidden to handle the pen, or to caſt up a few figures, ſince it may be very much for their advantage in almoſt all circumſtances of life, except in the very loweſt rank of ſervitude or hard labour. And I beg leave here to intreat the female youth, eſpecially thoſe of better circumſtances in the world, to maintain their ſkill in writing which they have already learned, by taking every occaſion to exerciſe it: and I would fain perſuade them to take pains in acquainting themſelves with true ſpelling, the want of which is one reaſon why many of them are aſhamed to write; and they are not aſhamed to own and declare this, as though

though it were a juſt and ſufficient excuſe for neglecting and loſing the uſe of the pen.

SECT. V.

Of a Trade or Employment.

IN a good education it is required alſo that children, in the common ranks of life, be brought up to the knowledge of ſome proper buſineſs or employment for their lives; ſome trade or traffic, artifice or manufacture, by which they may ſupport their expences, and procure for themſelves the neceſſaries of life, and by which they may be enabled to provide for their families in due time. In ſome of the eaſtern nations, even perſons of the higheſt rank are obliged to be educated in ſome employment or profeſſion; and perhaps that practice has many advantages in it: it engages their younger years in labour and diligence, and ſecures from the miſchievous effects of ſloth, idleneſs, vanity, and a thouſand temptations.

In our nation I confeſs it is a cuſtom to educate the children of noblemen, and the eldeſt ſons of the gentry, to no proper buſineſs or profeſſion, but only to an acquaintance with ſome of the ornaments and accompliſhments of life, which I ſhall mention immediately. But perhaps it would be far happier for ſome families, if the ſons were brought up to buſineſs, and kept to the practice of it, than to have them expoſed to the pernicious inconveniencies of a ſauntering and idle life, and the more violent impulſe of all the corrupt inclinations of youth.

However, it is certain that far the greater part of mankind muſt bring up their children to ſome regular buſineſs and profeſſion, whereby they may ſuſtain their lives and ſupport a family, and become uſeful members to the ſtate. Now in the choice of ſuch a profeſſion or employment for children, many things are to be conſulted.

(1.) The circumſtances and eſtate of the parent; whether it will reach to place out the child as an apprentice, to provide for him materials for his buſineſs or trade,

trade, and to ſupport him till he ſhall be able to maintain himſelf by his profeſſion. Sometimes the ambition of the parent and the child hath fixed on a trade far above their circumſtances; in conſequence of which the child hath been expoſed to many inconveniencies, and the parent to many ſorrows.

(2.) The capacity and talents of the child muſt alſo be conſidered. If it be a profeſſion of hard labour; hath the child a healthy and firm conſtitution, and ſtrength of body equal to the work? If it be a profeſſion that requires the exerciſe of fancy, ſkill, and judgment, or much ſtudy and contrivance; then the queſtion will be, hath the lad a genius capable of thinking well, a bright imagination, a ſolid judgment? Is he able to endure ſuch an application of mind as is neceſſary for the employment?

(3.) The temper and inclination of the child muſt be brought into this conſultation, in order to determine a proper buſineſs for life. If the daily labour and buſineſs of a man be not agreeable to him, he can never hope to manage it with any great advantage or ſucceſs. I knew a bricklayer, who profeſſed that he had always an averſion to the ſmell of mortar: and I was acquainted once with a lad who began to learn Greek at ſchool, but he complained it did not agree with his conſtitution. I think the firſt of theſe ought to have been brought up to work in glaſs or timber, or any thing rather than in bricks: as for the other (to my beſt remembrance), he was wiſely diſpoſed of to a calling wherein he had nothing to do with Greek.

And here I would beg leave to deſire, that none might be encouraged to purſue any of the learned profeſſions, that is, divinity, law, or phyſic, who have not the ſigns of a good genius, who are not patient of long attention and cloſe application to ſtudy, who have not a peculiar delight in that profeſſion which they chooſe, and withal a pretty firm conſtitution of body; for much ſtudy is a wearineſs to the fleſh, and the vigour of nature is ſooner impaired by laborious thoughtfulneſs than by the labour of the limbs.

(4.) It ſhould be alſo the ſolicitous and conſtant care of parents, when they place out their children in

the world, to seek out masters for them who profess serious religion, who practise all moral virtues, and keep good orders and good hours in their family. The neglect of this concern has been the ruin of a thousand youths in our day; and notwithstanding the sensible mischief arising from this negligence, yet there is still too little care taken in a matter of so great importance *.

Thus much for this part of the education of sons. But you will say then, what business of life must daughters be brought up to? I must confess when I have seen so many of this sex, who have lived well in the time of their childhood, grievously exposed to many hardships and poverty upon the death of their parents, I have often wished there were more of the callings or employments of life peculiarly appropriated to women, and that they were regularly educated in them, that there might be a better provision made for their support. What if all the garments which are worn by women were so limited and restrained in the manufacture of them, that they should all be made only by their own sex? This would go a great way toward relief in this case: and what if some of the easier labours of life were reserved for them only? But this is not my province.

However it may be as to this matter, it is the custom of the nation, and indeed it hath been the custom of most nations and ages, to educate daughters in the knowledge of things that relate to the affairs of the household, to spin and to use the needle, both for making garments and for the ornaments of embroidery: they have been generally employed in the preparation of food, in the regular disposal of the affairs of the house for the conveniencies and accommodations of human life, in the furniture of the rooms, and the elegancies

* This danger arises in a great degree from the immoderate love of pleasures, that so generally prevails, and leads masters into parties and engagements, especially on the Lord's-day; which not only occasions the neglect of religious instruction and family-prayer on the evening of it, but sets an example to servants which they think themselves authorized to follow, though it be generally to their own destruction.

gancies of entertainment. "Sarah made ready three measures of meal and kneaded it, and made cakes upon the hearth, Gen. xviii. 6. And the women of Israel that were wife hearted did spin with their hands, both blue, and purple, and fcarlet, and fine linen, for the tabernacle, Exod. xxxv. 25. Women fhall bake your bread, Lev. xxvi. 26. Women few pillows and make kerchiefs, Ezek. xiii. 18." which words, though perhaps they are a metaphor in that text, yet denote the office or work of women. "And Dorcas made coats and garments for the poor," Acts ix. 36. 39. I might cite many ancient Heathen authors to prove the fame thing among the Greeks and Romans, if it were needful.

Some of thefe things are the conftant labours and cares of women in our day, whereby they maintain themfelves: the moft laborious parts of them belong to the poor. And it is the opinion of the beft judges, that, even in fuperior and wealthy circumftances, every daughter fhould be fo far inftructed in them, as to know when they are performed aright, that the fervant may not ufurp too much power, and impofe on the ignorance of the miftrefs. Nature and providence feem to have defigned thefe offices for the fex in all ages and in all nations, becaufe while the men are engaged in harder and more robuft labours, and are often called abroad on buftnefs, the women are more generally accuftomed to keep houfe and dwell at home; and the word of God, as well as the cuftom of human life, recommends it. Tit. ii. 5. 1 Tim. v. 14.

SECT. VI.

Rules of Prudence.

ALL children fhould have fome inftruction given them in the conduct of human life, fome neceffary rules of prudence, by which they may regulate the management of their own affairs, and their behaviour towards their fellow-creatures. Where all other forts of knowledge are conferred upon children, if this be wanting, they make but a contemptible figure in the world,

world, and plunge themſelves into many inconveniencies.

Some of theſe rules of prudence are of a general nature, and neceſſary at all times, and upon all occaſions: others are more particular, and proper to be uſed according to the various occurrences of life.

If I were to inquire what are the foundations of human prudence, I ſhould rank them under theſe three heads.

1. A knowledge of ourſelves. Here every one ſhould be taught to conſider within himſelf, what is my temper and natural inclination; what are my moſt powerful appetites and my prevailing paſſions; what are my chief talents and capacities, if I have any at all; what are the weakneſſes and follies to which I am moſt liable, eſpecially in the days of youth; what are the temptations and dangers that attend me; what are my circumſtances in the world; and what my various relations to mankind round about me: what are my conſtant, and what my occaſional duties; what are the inward or outward advantages that attend me, or the diſadvantages under which I labour. A wiſe and juſt ſurvey of all theſe things, and keeping them always in mind, will be of unſpeakable uſe to us in the conduct of life, that we may ſet our chief guard upon our weak ſide, and where our greateſt dangers lie; that we may employ our talents aright, and ſeize all advantages to improve them for the beſt purpoſe, and proceed in the ſhorteſt way to piety, uſefulneſs, and peace.

2. The knowledge of mankind is alſo neceſſary to acquire prudence. And here young perſons ſhould not only be taught what is the general nature and capacity, the virtues and the vices, and the follies of mankind; but they ſhould be informed alſo, or at leaſt ſhould be taught to obſerve more particularly, what are the peculiar tempers, appetites, paſſions, powers, good and evil qualities of the perſons with whom they have moſt to do in the world; that they may learn to behave wiſely with regard to others, and that they may make a proper improvement of all the brighter and darker characters which they obſerve amongſt men, both for their own advantage and for the benefit of

their fellow-creatures. This may have a happy influence to lead them to avoid the vices and follies which have plunged others into miſchief, to imitate the virtues of thoſe who have behaved well in life, and to ſecure themſelves from any dangers and miſeries, as well as to pity the weakneſſes and ſorrows of mankind, and afford them a willing and cheerful relief.

3. The knowledge of the things of the world, and the various affairs of human life, muſt be included as one of the chief foundations of prudence. It would be endleſs to run over particulars of this kind; but in a ſpecial manner young perſons ſhould apply themſelves to know thoſe things which moſt nearly concern them, and which have the moſt immediate relation to their own buſineſs and duty, to their own intereſt and welfare: and it is a valuable part of wiſdom to neglect other things, and not to waſte our time and ſpirits in them, when they ſtand in any competition with our proper and moſt important work, whether we conſider ourſelves as men or as Chriſtians.

Solomon tells us, Eccleſ. iii. 1. 17. and viii. 5, 6. There is both time and judgment for every work, and for every purpoſe under the heaven: and that a wiſe man's heart diſcerneth both time and judgment; that is, he judgeth well concerning what is to be done, and the time when to do it: and therefore the miſery of man is great upon him, becauſe he knows not this time and judgment, he doth neither diſcern what is proper to be done, nor the proper ſeaſon of doing it. Prudence conſiſts in judging well what is to be ſaid, and what is to be done, on every new occaſion; when to lie ſtill and when to be active; when to keep ſilence, and when to ſpeak; what to avoid, and what to purſue; how to act in every difficulty; what means to make uſe of to compaſs ſuch an end; how to behave in every circumſtance of life, and in all companies; how to gain the favour of mankind in order to promote our own happineſs, and to do the moſt ſervice to God and the moſt good to men, according to that ſtation we poſſeſs, and thoſe opportunities which we enjoy.

For this purpoſe there is no book better than the Proverbs of Solomon. Several of the firſt chapters ſeem to

to be written for young men, under the name of Solomon's ſon: and all the reſt of them ſhould be made familiar to youth by their frequent converſe with them, and treaſuring them up in their head and heart.

Among human writings of this kind, perhaps the book called Eccleſiaſticus, though it be among the apocryphal writings, is equal to the beſt of the ancients. And among the moderns, I know not a better collection than the little book of Directions, Counſels, and Advices, lately publiſhed by Dr Fuller for the uſe of his ſon; though I could wiſh he had rendered it univerſally acceptable to all readers, by avoiding ſome ſeverities on the other ſex; and that he had ſpared his little raillieries on the name of ſaints, though thoſe offenſive ſentences are but few.

SECT. VII.

The Ornaments and Accompliſhments of Life.

THE laſt part of inſtruction which I include in the idea of a good education, is an inſtruction of youth in ſome of the uſeful ornaments and accompliſhments of life.

It has been the cuſtom of our nation, for perſons of the middle and the lower ranks of life, who deſign their children for trades and manufactures, to ſend them to the Latin and Greek ſchools. There they wear out four or five years of time in learning a number of ſtrange words, that will be of very little uſe to them in all the following affairs of their ſtation: and this very learning alſo is generally taught in a very tireſome and moſt irrational method, when they are forced to learn Latin by grammars and rules written in that unknown tongue. When they leave the ſchool they uſually forget what they have learned, and the chief advantage they gain by it, is to ſpell and pronounce hard words better when they meet them in Engliſh: whereas this ſkill of ſpelling might be attained in

in a far ſhorter time, and at an eaſier rate, by other methods *, and much of life might be ſaved and improved to better purpoſes.

As for the ſons of thoſe who enjoy more plentiful circumſtances in the world, they may be inſtructed in the Latin and Greek languages for ſeveral valuable ends in their ſtation: and eſpecially thoſe who deſign the learned profeſſions ought thoroughly to underſtand them; and ſuch as purſue the ſtudy of divinity muſt be acquainted alſo with Hebrew and Chaldee, that they may read the Old Teſtament in its original language as well as the New.

The French is now-a days eſteemed alſo an accompliſhment to both ſexes. If they have time enough, which they know not how to employ better, and a good memory, I would not forbid it. There are ſeveral good books written in that language which are not unworthy of our peruſal: and there are many words now introduced in the Engliſh language, borrowed and derived from thence, as well as from the Latin and Greek; ſo that it may not be improper for an Engliſh gentleman to learn theſe tongues, that he may underſtand his own the better. I add alſo, that if perſons have much acquaintance with the French nation, or have occaſion to converſe with foreigners at court or in the city, or if they deſign to travel abroad, the French is a neceſſary tongue, becauſe it is ſo much ſpoken in Europe, and eſpecially in courts. But otherwiſe, there are ſo many of the valuable writings of French authors perpetually tranſlated into Engliſh, that it is a needleſs thing to go through much difficulty, or take much pains in attaining it. I am inclined to believe, that, (except in the caſes above mentioned), few have found the profit anſwer the labour. As for thoſe perſons who are bred up to traffic with other nations, they muſt neceſſarily learn the language of thoſe nations; and this I reckon not among their accompliſhments, but conſider it as rather a part of their proper buſineſs in life.

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* See my Art of Reading and Writing, chap. xxi.

In ſhort, it is a thing of far greater value and importance, that youth ſhould be perfectly well ſkilled in reading, writing, and ſpeaking their native tongue in a proper, a polite and graceful manner, than in toiling among foreign languages. It is of more worth and advantage to gentlemen and ladies to have an exact knowledge of what is decent, juſt, and elegant in Engliſh, than to be a critic in foreign tongues. The very knowledge of foreign words ſhould be improved to this purpoſe: and in order to obtain this accompliſhment, they ſhould frequently converſe with thoſe perſons and books which are eſteemed polite and elegant in their kind.

Thus far concerning the knowledge of words. But the knowledge of things is of much more importance.

1. The young gentry of both ſexes ſhould be a little acquainted with logic, that they may learn to obtain clear ideas; to judge by reaſon and the nature of things; to baniſh the prejudices of infancy, cuſtom, and humour; to argue cloſely and juſtly on any ſubject; and to caſt their thoughts and affairs into a proper and eaſy method.

2. Several parts of mathematical learning are alſo neceſſary ornaments of the mind, and not without real advantage: and many of theſe are ſo agreeable to the fancy, that youth will be entertained and pleaſed in acquiring the knowledge of them.

Beſides the common ſkill in accounts which is needful for a trader, there is a variety of pretty and uſeful rules and practices in arithmetic, to which a gentleman ſhould be no ſtranger: and if his genius lie that way, a little inſight into algebra would be no diſadvantage to him. It is fit that young people of any figure in the world ſhould ſee ſome of the ſprings and clues whereby ſkilful men, by plain rules of reaſon, trace out the moſt deep, diſtant, and hidden queſtions; and whereby they find certain anſwers to thoſe inquiries, which at firſt view ſeem to lie without the ken of mankind, and beyond the reach of human knowledge. It was for want of a little more general acquaintance with mathematical learning in the world, that a good algebraiſt and a geometer were counted conjurers a century

tury ago, and people applied to them to ſeek for loſt horſes and ſtolen goods.

They ſhould know ſomething of geometry, ſo far at leaſt as to underſtand the names of the various lines and angles, ſurfaces and ſolids: to know what is meant by a right line or a curve, a right angle and an oblique, whether acute or obtuſe: how the quantity of angles is meaſured, what is a circle, a ſemicircle, an arch, a quadrant, a degree and minute, a diameter and radius: what we mean by a triangle, a ſquare, a parallelogram, a polygon, a cube, a pyramid, a priſm, a cone, an ellipſis or oval, an hyperbola, a parabola, &c. and to know ſome of the moſt general properties of angles, triangles, ſquares, and circles, &c. The world is now grown ſo learned in mathematical ſcience, that this ſort of language is often uſed in common writings and in converſation, far beyond what it was in the days of our fathers. And beſides, without ſome knowledge of this kind, we cannot make any farther progreſs towards an acquaintance with the arts of ſurveying, meaſuring, geography, and aſtronomy, which are ſo entertaining and ſo uſeful an accompliſhment to perſons of a polite education.

Geography and aſtronomy are exceedingly delightful ſtudies. The knowledge of the lines and circles of the globes, of heaven and earth, is counted ſo neceſſary in our age, that no perſon of either ſex is now eſteemed to have had an elegant education without it. Even tradeſmen and the actors in common life ſhould, in my opinion, in their younger years, learn ſomething of theſe ſciences, inſtead of vainly wearing out ſeven years of drudgery in Greek and Latin.

It is of conſiderable advantage as well as delight for mankind, to know a little of the earth on which they dwell, and of the ſtars and ſkies that ſurround them on all ſides. It is almoſt neceſſary for young perſons (who pretend to any thing of inſtruction and ſchooling above the loweſt rank of people) to get a little acquaintance with the ſeveral parts of the land and the ſea, that they may know in what quarter of the world the chief cities and countries are ſituated; that at the mention of the word Copenhagen, they may not groſsly blunder

blunder and expose themselves, (as a certain gentleman once did), by supposing it to be the name of a Dutch commander. Without this knowledge we cannot read any history with profit, nor so much as understand the common news-papers.

It is necessary also to know something of the heavenly bodies, and their various motions and periods of revolution, that we may understand the accounts of time in past ages, and the histories of ancient nations, as well as know the reasons of day and night, summer and winter, and the various appearances and places of the moon and other planets. Then we shall not be terrified at every eclipse, or presage, and foretel public desolations at the sight of a comet: we shall see the sun covered with darkness, and the full moon deprived of her light, without foreboding imaginations that the government is in danger, or that the world is come to an end. This will not only increase rational knowledge, and guard us against foolish and ridiculous fears, but it will amuse the mind most agreeably; and it has a most happy tendency to raise in our thoughts the noblest and most magnificent ideas of God by the survey of his works, in their surprising grandeur and divine artifice.

3. Natural philosophy, at least in the more general principles and foundations of it, should be infused into the minds of youth. This is a very bright ornament of our rational natures, which are inclined to be inquisitive into the causes and reasons of things. A course of philosophical experiments is now frequently attended by the ladies as well as gentleman, with no small pleasure and improvement. God and religion may be better known, and clearer ideas may be obtained of the amazing wisdom of our Creator, and of the glories of the life to come, as well as of the things of this life, by the rational learning and the knowledge of nature that is now so much in vogue. If I were to recommend a book or two on this subject, which may usefully be read by the ladies as well as gentlemen, I know none better than Mr Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation, Dr Derham's Discourses on the same subject, the Archbishop of Cambray's Trea-

tise

tife of the Exiſtence of God, at leaſt to the fiftieth ſection, Nieuwerteit's Religious Philoſopher, and Dr Mather's Chriſtian Philoſopher. Theſe things will enlarge and refine the underſtanding, improve the judgment, and bring the faculty of reaſoning into a juſter exerciſe, even upon all manner of ſubjects.

4. Hiſtory is another accompliſhment of youth and ornament of education. The narratives of the various occurrences in nations, as well as in the lives of particular perſons, ſlide into younger minds with pleaſure. Theſe will furniſh the ſoul in time with a treaſure of knowledge, whence to derive uſeful obſervations, inferences, and rules of conduct. Theſe will enable us to gratify our acquaintance, by rehearſing ſuch narrations at proper ſeaſons, and render our own company agreeable and uſeful to mankind.

5. Nor can our education be called completely elegant without ſomething of poeſy, in ſo very polite an age as this.

While I mention ſome knowledge of poeſy as a proper ornament of youth, I would not be underſtood as though I recommended verſe-making to every young gentleman and lady. It is an old proverb, that poets are born, and not made. And though I have been too far betrayed by an unguarded inclination, into attempts of this kind, in ſome of my former years, yet while I ſometimes repent of having laid out ſo many days and hours of a ſhort life in writing verſes, I will not encourage others to practiſe it, unleſs they are bleſt with a brighter genius, and find an inſuperable bent and bias of ſoul that way: and even with them let it be a diverſion and not a buſineſs.

The thing therefore which I here recommended to perſons of a polite education, is ſome acquaintance with good verſe. To read it in the beſt authors, to learn to know, and taſte, and feel a fine ſtanza, as well as hear it, and to treaſure up ſome of the richeſt ſentiments and expreſſions of the moſt admired writers, is all that I mean in this advice.

Nor is this a mere amuſement or uſeleſs embroidery of the mind. It brightens and animates the fancy with a thouſand beautiful images, it enriches the ſoul with many

many great and sublime sentiments and refined ideas, it fills the memory with a noble variety of language, and furnishes the tongue with speech and expression suited to every subject. It teaches the art of describing well, and of painting every thing to the life, and dressing up all the pleasing and the frightful scenes of nature and providence, vice and virtue, in their proper charms and horrors. It assists us in the art of persuasion, it leads us into a pathetic manner of speech and writing, and adds life and beauty to conversation.

How often have we been enabled to gild a gloomy hour of life, and to soften a rough and painful occurrence, by meditating and repeating the lines of some great poet? Between the colours and the harmony that belong to verse, our senses and our souls are sometimes sweetly entertained in a solitary retirement; and sometimes we entertain our friends agreeably, we regale them as with music and painting at once, and gladden the whole company.

But poetry hath still some sublimer powers. It raises our dying religion to a heavenly degree, and kindles a flame of holy love and joy in the heart. If the memory be well stored with devout songs, we shall never be at a loss for divine meditation: we may exalt the praises of God and our Saviour at all times, and feel our souls borne up as on the wings of angels, far above this dusky globe of earth, till we have left all its flattering vanities and its painful vexations. Poesy was first designed for the service of religion, and dedicated to the temple. Moses and David made divine and illustrious use of it. The royal psalmist is mounted on the wing of inspiration and sacred verse, far above the level of the Jewish ceremonies and shadows, and converses with heavenly things, and leads abroad the glories of the future Messiah, amidst the raptures of his sublime and inimitable poesy.

But it is time to descend and mention some of the accomplishments of animal nature. The first of this kind, and perhaps the nearest to poesy, is the art of singing. A most charming gift of the God of nature, and designed for the solace of our sorrows and the improvement of our joys. Those young persons who are blest

with

with a muſical ear and voice, ſhould have ſome inſtruction beſtowed on them, that they may acquire this delightful ſkill. I am ſorry that the greateſt part of our ſongs, whereby young gentlemen and ladies are taught to practiſe this art, are of the amorous kind, and ſome of them polluted too. Will no happy genius lend a helping hand to reſcue muſic from all its defilements, and to furniſh the tongue with a nobler and more refined melody? But ſinging muſt not be named alone.

Various harmony both of the wind and ſtring were once in uſe in divine worſhip, and that by divine appointment. It is certain then, that the uſe of theſe inſtruments in common life is no unlawful practice, though the New Teſtament has not ordained the uſe of it in evangelical worſhip. But if the voice be happily capable of this art, it is preferable to all inſtruments faſhioned and compoſed by man: this is an organ formed and tuned by God himſelf. It is moſt eaſily kept in exerciſe, the ſkill is retained longeſt, and the pleaſure tranſcends all the reſt. Where an ode of noble and ſeraphic compoſure is ſet throughout to muſic and ſung by an artful voice, while the ſpirit at the ſame time enjoys a devout temper, the joys of the ſoul and the ſenſe are united, and it approaches to the ſcriptural ideas of the celeſtial ſtate. Happy the youth who has a bright and harmonious conſtitution, with a pious turn of ſoul, a cheerful ſpirit, and a reliſh of ſacred melody! He takes a frequent flight above this lower world, beyond the regions of ſenſe and time; he joins the concert of the heavenly inhabitants, and ſeems to anticipate the buſineſs and the bleſſedneſs of eternity.

Shall I be allowed after this, to mention drawing and painting as agreeable amuſements of polite youth? Where the genius leads that way it is a noble diverſion, and improves the mind. Nature has her ſhare in this as well as in poeſy; where nature inclines, let polite youth be taught to ſketch a little on paper; let them have at leaſt ſome taſte of theſe arts, ſome capacity of being pleaſed with a curious draught, a noble painting, an elegant ſtatue, and fine reſemblances of nature. This is an ingenious and a graceful acquire-

ment. Mr Richardſon's Eſſay on the Theory of Painting is the beſt book that I know on that ſubject, and ſufficient to give a young gentleman a general knowledge of the art.

Shall I now name the art of fencing and of riding the managed horſe, as an accompliſhment for gentlemen? Theſe are exerciſes of a healthy kind, and may be uſeful in human life. Shall I ſpeak of dancing as a modiſh accompliſhment of both ſexes? I confeſs I know no evil in it. This alſo is a healthful exerciſe, and it gives young perſons a decent manner of appearance in company. It may be profitable to ſome good purpoſes, if it be well guarded againſt all the abuſes and temptations that may attend it. It was uſed of old to ſacred and civil rejoicing, Exod. xv. 20, 21. 2 Sam. vi. 14. 1 Sam. xviii 6. It is certainly an advantage to have the body formed early to graceful motion, to which the art of dancing may have contributed. But where it is ſo much beloved and indulged, it has moſt ſenſible dangers, eſpecially mixed dancing. It leads youth too often and too early into company; it may create too much forwardneſs and aſſurance in the ſex whoſe chief glory is their modeſty; it may kindle vain and vicious inclinations, and raiſe in young minds too great a fondneſs for the exceſſive gaieties and licentious pleaſures of the age.

In all theſe affairs a wiſe parent will keep a watchful eye upon the child, while he indulges it in theſe gratifications of youth and inclination: a wiſe parent will daily obſerve whether the ſon or the little daughter begin to be too much charmed with any of the gay ornaments and amuſements of life; and, with a prudent and ſecret ſolicitude, will take care leſt any of them intrench on the more neceſſary and more important duties of life and religion. And according to this view of things, the parent's hand will either give a looſer rein to the purſuit of theſe exerciſes, or will manage the propenſities of the child with a needful and becoming reſtraint.

But among all the accompliſhments of youth, there is none preferable to a decent and agreeable behaviour among men, a modeſt freedom of ſpeech, a ſoft and

elegant manner of addreſs, a graceful and lovely deportment, a cheerful gravity and good humour, with a mind appearing ever ſerene under the ruffling accidents of human life: add to this, a pleaſing ſolemnity and reverence when the diſcourſe turns upon any thing ſacred and divine, a becoming neglect of injuries, a hatred of calumny and ſlander, a habit of ſpeaking well of others, a pleaſing benevolence and readineſs to do good to mankind, and ſpecial compaſſion to the miſerable; with an air and countenance, in a natural and unaffected manner, expreſſive of all theſe excellent qualifications.

Some of theſe, I own, are to be numbered among the duties and virtues, rather than among the ornaments of mankind: but they muſt be confeſſed to be ornaments as well as virtues. They are graces in the eye of man as well as of God. Theſe will beſpeak the affection of all that know us, and engage even an ill-natured world betimes in our favour. Theſe will enable the youth of both ſexes, who are ſo happy to attain them, to enter upon the ſtage of life with approbation and love, to paſs through the world with eaſe (as far as eaſe may be expected in ſo degenerate and unhappy a ſtate of things), to finiſh the ſcenes of action on earth with applauſe, and to leave behind them the monument of a good name, when their bodies ſleep in the duſt, and their ſouls dwell with God.

SECT. VIII.

A Guard againſt evil Influences from Perſons and Things.

IT belongs alſo to a good education, that children be guarded and ſecured (as far as poſſible) from all evil influences and unhappy impreſſions, which they may be expoſed to receive both from perſons and things. I ſhall ſufficiently explain this direction by particular inſtances.

Let not nurſes or ſervants be ſuffered to fill their minds with ſilly tales and with ſenſeleſs rhimes, many of which are ſo abſurd and ridiculous, that they will not bear to be repreſented in a grave diſcourſe. The imagination

gination of young creatures is hereby flattered and deceived: their reaſon is groſsly abuſed and impoſed upon: and by this means they are trained up to be amuſed with follies and nonſenſe, rather than to exerciſe their underſtanding, which is the glory of human nature.

Let not any perſons that are near them terrify their tender minds with diſmal ſtories of witches and ghoſts, of devils and evil ſpirits, of fairies and bugbears in the dark. This hath had a moſt miſchievous effect on ſome children, and hath fixed in their conſtitutions ſuch a rooted ſlavery and fear, that they have ſcarcely dared to be left alone all their lives, eſpecially in the night. Theſe ſtories have made ſuch a deep and frightful impreſſion on their tender fancies, that it hath enervated their ſouls, it hath broken their ſpirits early, it hath grown up with them, and mingled with their religion, it hath laid a wretched foundation for melancholy and diſtracting ſorrows. Let theſe ſort of informations be reſerved for their firmer years, and let them not be told in their hearing, till they can better judge what truth or reality there is in them, and be made ſenſible how much is owing to romance and fiction.

Nor let their little hearts be frighted at three or four years old with ſhocking and bloody hiſtories, with maſſacres and martyrdoms, with cuttings and burnings, with the images of horrible and barbarous murders, with racks and red-hot pincers, with engines of torment and cruelty, with mangled limbs, and carcaſes drenched in gore. It is time enough, when their ſpirits are grown a little firmer, to acquaint them with theſe madneſſes and miſeries of human nature. There is no need that the hiſtory of the holy confeſſors and martyrs ſhould be ſet before their thoughts ſo early in all their moſt ghaſtly ſhapes and colours. Theſe things, when they are a little older, may be of excellent uſe to diſcover to them the wicked and bloody principles of perſecution, both among the Heathens and the Papiſts; and to teach them the power of the grace of Chriſt, is ſupporting theſe poor ſufferers under all the torments which they ſuſtained for the love of God and the truth.

Let their ears be ever kept from all immodeſt ſtories, and from wanton ſongs: from riddles and puns with double meanings and foul intentions: let them not be ſuffered to read wanton jeſts or amorous romances: and due care ſhould be taken to remove all books out of their way that may defile their imagination, or teach them the language or the ſentiments of impurity. Nor let their eyes be entertained with lewd and unclean pictures, and images of things or actions that are not fit to be expoſed. Theſe things indeed have too often an unhappy influence to corrupt the fancy and the manners; and in riper years have been the occaſion of numberleſs miſchiefs: but eſpecially they ſhould be kept far away from the ſight or hearing of children, leſt too deep and dangerous impreſſions be made in thoſe early years of life. Nothing but what is chaſte, pure, and innocent, ſhould come within the reach of their eyes and ears. Even the common neceſſities and actions of nature ſhould be always expreſſed before them in the moſt modeſt forms of ſpeech that our mother-tongue can furniſh us with. In this reſpect (as the poet ſays) children ſhould be treated with great reverence.

Maxima debetur pueris reverentia.

It is confeſſed that books of anatomy, and other parts of neceſſary ſcience, are proper to be written; and theſe may be conſulted by perſons who are grown up to a due age, eſpecially by thoſe whoſe profeſſion requires it. There is alſo ſome neceſſity of foul narratives, where foul crimes are committed, and ought to be publicly expoſed and brought to juſtice and puniſhment. As the affairs of mankind ſtand, theſe things cannot always be avoided: but there is no manner of neceſſity that children ſhould read them, or raſh unguarded youth.

For ſome of the reaſons before-mentioned, there ſhould be a wiſe conduct in ſhewing children what parts of the Bible they ſhould read: for though the word of God expreſſeth all things with due decency, yet there are ſome things which have been found neceſſary to be ſpoken of in ſcripture, both in the laws of Moſes and

and in the repreſentation of the wickedneſs of the Gentiles in the New Teſtament, in which adult perſons have been concerned, which there is no neceſſity for children to read and hear, and they may be paſſed over or omitted among them. The Jews were wont to withhold Solomon's Song from their children till they were thirty years old: and the late pious and prudent Biſhop Tillotſon (in a manuſcript which I have ſeen) wiſhes that thoſe parts of the Bible wherein there are ſome of the affairs of mankind expreſſed too naturally (as he calls it) were omitted in the public leſſons of the church: I think they may as well be excepted alſo out of the common leſſons of children, and out of the daily courſe of reading in family-worſhip.

Let parents take as much care as they can in the choice of companions and play-fellows for their ſons and their daughters. It would be a happy thing if children, who are bred up in ſchools, could be ſecured from the company and evil influence of other children, who curſe and ſwear, who take the name of God in vain, and uſe filthy and unclean language. Maſters and miſtreſſes ſhould be very watchful and ſtrict in their inquiries into the behaviour of their ſcholars of both ſexes when they are out of their ſight, that if it were poſſible there might not be one among them whoſe lips are impure or profane: for one diſeaſed ſheep may infect the whole flock. However, where children find ſuch immorality practiſed by any of their fellows, they ſhould be taught to ſhew their utmoſt abhorrence of it, and ſpeedily forſake ſuch pernicious company.

SECT. IX.

A Guard ſet on the Sport and Diverſion of Children.

AS parents ſhould take care to have their children employed in proper learning and buſineſs, ſo they ſhould not think it beneath them to concern themſelves a little about their ſports and recreations. Human nature, eſpecially in younger years, cannot be conſtantly kept intent on work, learning, or labour. There muſt be

ſome intervals of pleaſure to give a looſe to the mind, and to refreſh the natural ſpirits. Too long and intenſe a confinement to one thing is ready to over-tire the ſpirits of youth, and to weaken the ſprings of activity by exceſſive fatigue. It is an old ſimile on this occaſion, and a very juſt one, that a bow kept always bent will grow feeble and loſe its force. The alternate ſucceſſions of buſineſs and diverſion preſerve the body and ſoul of children in the happieſt temper: and learning is more cloſely purſued, and work better done, after ſome agreeable relaxations. The young creatures apply themſelves to their buſineſs with new vigour after the enjoyment of ſome pleaſurable releaſe.

I confeſs it would be a conſiderable advantage, if the various parts of learning and buſineſs in which children are employed were ſo happily contrived, that one might be as it were a relaxation or diverſion, when the mind is tired with the other: and if the children have a taſte and reliſh of reading and improvement of the mind, there is a rich variety of entertainment to be found in books of poetry, hiſtory, accounts of the wonders of art and nature, as well as ingenious practices in mechanical and mathematical affairs. It is happieſt indeed, where this reliſh is the gift of nature; yet children may be trained up, by wiſe and alluring methods, to delight in knowledge, and to chooſe ſuch ſort of recreations, eſpecially in winter-nights and rainy ſeaſons, when they cannot enjoy the more active diverſions abroad. Yet beſides theſe, ſome other ſorts of ſports will generally be found neceſſary for children of almoſt all diſpoſitions.

And their ſports ought to be ſuch as are in ſome meaſure choſen by themſelves, that they may be matter of delight, yet ſtill under the regulation of the eye and prudence of a parent. No ſort of play ſhould be permitted, wherein ſacred things become a matter of jeſt or merriment. No ſport ſhould be indulged wherein foul language, ill names, or ſcandal are practiſed; wherein there is any violation of modeſty, or of the rules of decency and cleanlineſs; nothing muſt be ſuffered wherein there is any breach of the moral precepts of the law of God; wherein cozening or cheating,

ing, falſehood or lying, are practiſed or allowed. They ſhould be confined to honeſty, juſtice, truth, and goodneſs, even in their very play.

They ſhould not be permitted to uſe ſuch ſporting as may tend to diſcompoſe their ſpirits, diſorder their nature, injure their fleſh, prejudice their health, break their limbs, or do miſchief to themſelves, or each other. This ſhould rather be the play of dogs or horſes than of children.

Nor ſhould they ever be allowed to practiſe thoſe diverſions that carry an idea of barbarity and cruelty in them, though it be but to brute creatures. They ſhould not ſet up cocks to be banged with cudgels thrown at them about Shrove-tide; nor delight in giving a tedious lingering death to a young litter of dogs or cats, that may be appointed to be deſtroyed and drowned, leſt they multiply too much in a houſe: nor ſhould they take pleaſure in pricking, cutting, or mangling young birds which they have caught, nor uſing any ſavage and bloody practices towards any creatures whatſoever, leſt their hearts grow hard and unrelenting, and they learn in time to practiſe theſe cruelties on their own kind, and to murder and torture their fellow mortals, or at leaſt to be indifferent to their pain and diſtreſs, ſo as to occaſion it without remorſe.

They ſhould never be ſuffered to game for money, nor even for their own toys or play-things if they are coſtly and expenſive: many ſore inconveniencies in riper years ariſe from ſuch indulgences. And indeed no recreations ſhould be accounted lawful but thoſe in which they can with courage recommend themſelves to God, and deſire his bleſſing upon them.

Thoſe children who are kept pretty cloſe to learning in a ſchool, ſhould be directed to purſue their recreations, as much as may be, in the open air; and to exerciſe their limbs with vigour and activity, that their growth and health may not be impaired by ſtudy, and too much confinement to a book. But in very foul weather, or in long winter-evenings, (as I hinted before), they may be taught to ſeek ſuch diverſions as may at once refreſh and improve their minds.

For

For want of this, in ſome families, the games of draughts and chefs are practiſed, and ſome other little ſports upon a chefs-board, without any ſtakes or aim at gain, beyond the mere pleaſure of victory. In other houſes, cards and dice are introduced, for want of better recreations. The former of theſe, namely, draughts and chefs, are innocent enough, and may wear off a heavy hour, when the mind or body are unfit for buſineſs: the latter have had the general cenſure of our wiſe and pious fathers, and there have been moſt unhappy effects attending them: and indeed, theſe games are ſeldom uſed without depoſiting too much money as the ſtake; and this tends to engage the paſſions with greater vehemence than the nature of a recreation can require, or ſhould admit. But I leave it to thoſe who are more ſkilful in caſuiſtic divinity to prove them abſolutely unlawful in the very nature of the game.

However that be, I have often earneſtly wiſhed, that inſtead of all theſe games, there were ſome more profitable ſports invented for a long evening, for a dull hour, or a rainy ſeaſon: and I am well aſſured, that if ſome ingenious mind, which is well ſkilled in mathematical learning and in games, would but take pains to contrive ſome ſuch diverſions, there might be a much better account given of the hours of leiſure and remiſſion of buſineſs by perſons of both ſexes, and of all ages, than can be at preſent, for want of ſuch uſeful and improving recreations.

What if cards and dice ſhould be proved to be ever ſo lawful in themſelves, yet there might be various inventions, of much more advantage to knowledge and virtue, placed in the room of them. May not ſome little tablets of paſteboard be made in imitation of cards, which might teach the unlearned ſeveral parts of grammar, philoſophy, geometry, geography, aſtronomy? &c.

What if on one ſide of theſe tablets or charts a town or city were named and deſcribed, and on the other ſide the county, province, and kingdom where that town ſtands, with ſome geographical or hiſtorical remark on it: and whoſoever in play draws the chart with the town

town on it, ſhould be obliged to tell the county where it ſtands, and the remark on it?

What if on one ſide were a geometrical figure, and on the other the demonſtration of ſome property belonging to it?

What if one ſide bore the name or figure of any piece of money; and the other all the multiples of it by the nine digits, or as far as twelve? This would be uſeful for children bred up to a trade.

What if the figure of ſome plant, animal, engine, or any thing elſe in the world of nature or art, were printed on one ſide; and on the other the name of the thing, which ſhould be required to be ſpelled right by young ſcholars when they ſee the figure, in order to teach them the art of ſpelling. And if to this were added ſome beautiful expreſſion or deſcription of the thing, taken out of our beſt Engliſh poets, to be repeated by him who draws the chart which has the figure on it.

Or if on one ſide were a word in Engliſh, and on the other the ſame thing expreſſed in Latin, Greek, or French, for ſuch who learn thoſe languages.

Or if ſingle names of famous men and women were on one ſide; and the reverſe contained the hiſtory, or ſome ſhort account, of thoſe perſons whoſe names are ſo famous.

What if in a ſheet of paper, or a two-penny book, were written a hundred proverbs or wiſe ſayings, collected out of moraliſts, ancient and modern, relating to all the virtues and vices; and a collection of the moſt eminent examples of theſe vices and virtues were ſuperadded: and if one or more ſolid bodies of wood, of ſixteen, twenty, or thirty-two flat ſides were formed with the name of one virtue or vice inſcribed on each ſide; and by the trolling of this many-ſided toy, the uppermoſt word or name ſhould be an indication what proverb, or what example to require?

There have been, I confeſs, ſeveral ſorts of cards invented with proverbs, with various learned figures, and mathematical devices upon them: but, as far as I can learn, theſe have been but mere pictures and ornaments to the hearts and diamonds: theſe learned devices and

figures

figures have had no ſhare in the game: the cards are uſed like common cards ſtill, without any manner of improvement of any of the gameſters in theſe ſciences. But what I propoſe, is a contrivance to render theſe words, or figures, or ſentences, the very implements or engines of the ſport itſelf, without ſo much as the form of any ſpade, or club, or heart, or diamond drawn upon the chart or tablet.

Some of theſe exerciſes and diverſions, if happily contrived, may not only be fit to entertain children in their younger years, but may uſefully amuſe them when they are grown up toward manly age.

For my part, I own myſelf to be ſo much unſkilled in the various games uſed among us, that I am not fit to contrive, nor capable of inventing ſuch uſeful paſtime. But I wiſh ſome of the ſons of ingenuity had ſcience and virtue ſo much at heart, as to attempt ſuch a ſervice to mankind. And parents ſhould ſeek ſome ſort of delightful employments or recreations for the leiſure-hours of their ſons and their daughters, when they are in the ſtage of youth, that they may be the more eaſily withheld from thoſe diverſions of the preſent age, which are ſo faſhionable and yet ſo dangerous.

Among theſe dangerous and modiſh diverſions, I cannot forbear to mention midnight-aſſemblies, playhouſes, gaming-tables, and maſquerades. Let parents who would willingly ſee their children walking in the paths of piety and virtue, endeavour to guard their inclinations from theſe enticing amuſements. The religion and conſcience of many a well-inclined youth have been expoſed to great and imminent danger among thoſe ſcenes of vanity and folly, to ſay no worſe. My buſineſs is not to rail at them, though ſome of my readers will hardly forgive me that I deal with them ſo tenderly, and give them names of ſo ſoft a ſound. But this muſt be confeſſed, that if perſons of piety frequent them, they too much riſk their character and their innocence, and expoſe their virtue and their piety to great and needleſs temptations: or at leaſt by giving the ſanction of their preſence at ſuch places, and on ſuch occaſions, may make themſelves acceſſary to the

the ruin of thoſe who may be leſs fortified againſt their inſnaring tendency.

Yet ſome of theſe diverſions and amuſements are ſo charming to many a young thoughtleſs creature, that no riſk is thought too great to run, if they may but pleaſe their ears and their eyes, and gratify their idle and vain inclinations. Hence theſe houſes of pleaſure are filled and frequented: hence the threatres are crowded, and gaming-rooms attended by multitudes of youth whoſe parents have enjoyed the bleſſing of a ſtricter education: and though their eſtate can ſcarcely ſupport their irregular expence, yet they gratify their children in theſe hazardous recreations, and take no pains to cure them of this pernicious folly.

But the children of our age will pertly reply, "What, muſt we live like no-body? Muſt we turn "old Puritans again? Muſt we look like fools in com-"pany, where there is ſcarcely any diſcourſe but of "plays, operas, and maſquerades, of cards, dice, and "midnight-aſſemblies? And pray what ſin is there in "any of them?"

To this I anſwer, that I am very ſorry to find that the children of religious parents chooſe and delight in company where theſe things are the chief ſubject of converſation. I fear, leſt God and virtue, and the important things of another world, are utterly baniſhed out of ſuch a viſiting-room, where theſe diſcourſes are the chief entertainment, and there is little place found for any profitable converſation, even about the moſt uſeful and valuable affairs of this life.

But, light as theſe pert queſtions are, I will conſider them one after another. You ſay firſt, "Muſt "we look like old Puritans? Muſt we live like no-"body?" No, my friends, I am not perſuading you to return to the habit and guiſe of your anceſtors, nor to tranſact your viſits, nor to model your diverſions by the pattern of fourſcore years ago. There is a certain faſhion and appearance of things that belongs to every age: modes of converſation, and forms of behaviour, are ever changing in this life: and it is no improper thing for perſons, according to their rank and figure in life, to conform themſelves to the preſent cuſtoms,

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as far as they are innocent, and have no evil influence upon morality or religion. But where any unhappy cuſtoms prevail in the world that make an inroad upon your piety, that endanger your virtue, that break the good order of religious families, and are uſually or always attended with ſome miſchievous conſequences, ſurely in theſe inſtances it is better to look like a Puritan, and ſtand almoſt alone, than to follow the multitude in the road that leads to iniquity and miſchief. A Puritan, or a Separatiſt from the vain or dangerous courſes of a vicious world, is to this day a name of laſting glory, though the enemies of God and of your anceſtors may caſt it upon them in a way of reproach. There are ſome things in which you muſt dare to be ſingular, if you would be Chriſtians, and eſpecially in a corrupt and degenerate age. A ſenſe of the love of God ſecured to your hearts, and an inward peace of conſcience, will infinitely counterveil the enmity of the world, and overbalance the reproaches of an ungodly generation.

Beſides, if the families that profeſs religion, and deſire to preſerve piety amongſt them, and to tranſmit it down to their childrens children, would but heartily join together, in a reſolved abſtinence from theſe hazardous diverſions, there would be no need of any one of you to ſtand alone, and your appearance on the ſide of virtue would not be ſingular. You might animate and ſupport one another with public courage, and, having God and virtue on your ſide, you might, in ſome meaſure, bear down the effrontery and ridicule of an age of vice and ſenſuality; an age wherein comedies and maſquerades, gaming-tables, and midnight-aſſemblies, are become the modiſh diverſions.

But ſtill it may be ſaid, what ſin is there in any of them? Bear with me then while I take them in order one after another, and briefly give my opinion concerning each of them.

1. Let us begin with the playhouſe. It is granted that a dramatic repreſentation of the affairs of human life is by no means ſinful in itſelf: I am inclined to think that valuable compoſitions might be made of this kind, ſuch as might entertain a virtuous audience

with innocent delight, and even with ſome real profit. Such have been written in French, and have, in times paſt, been acted with applauſe. But it is too well known, that the comedies which appear on our ſtage, and moſt of the tragedies too, have no deſign to ſet religion or virtue in its beſt light, nor to render vice odious to the ſpectators. In many of them, piety makes a ridiculous figure, and virtue is dreſt in the habit of folly; the ſacred name of God is frequently taken in vain, if not blaſphemed; and the man of flagrant vice is the fine gentleman, and the poet's favourite, who muſt be rewarded at the end of the play.

Beſides, there is nothing will paſs on our theatres that has not the mixture of ſome amorous intrigue: lewdneſs itſelf reigns, and riots in ſome of their ſcenes: ſobriety is put quite out of countenance, and modeſty is in certain danger there: the youth of ſerious religion, that ventures ſometimes into this infected air, finds his antidotes too weak to reſiſt the contagion. The pleaſures of the cloſet and devout retirement are ſuſpended firſt, and then utterly vanquiſhed by the overpowering influence of the laſt comedy: the fancy is all over defiled, the vain images riſe uppermoſt in the ſoul, and pollute the feeble attempts of devotion, till by degrees ſecret religion is loſt and forgotten: and in a little time the playhouſe has got ſo much the maſtery of conſcience, that the young Chriſtian goes to bed after the evening-drama with as much ſatisfaction and eaſe as he uſed to do after evening-prayer.

If there has been found two or three plays which have been tolerably free from lewd and profane mixtures, there are ſome ſcores or hundreds that have many hateful paſſages in them, for which no excuſe can be made. And when all the charming powers of poeſy and muſic are joined with the gayeſt ſcenes and entertainments, to aſſault the ſenſes and the ſoul at once, and to drive out virtue from the poſſeſſion of the heart, it is to be feared that it will not long keep its place and power there. What a prophet of their own ſays of the court, may with much more truth and juſtice be ſaid of the theatre:

It is a golden, but a fatal circle,
Upon whoſe magic ſkirts a thouſand devils
In cryſtal forms ſit, tempting innocence,
And beckon early virtue from its centre.

Another of the poets of the town, who made no great pretences to virtue, and who well knew the qualities of the theatre, and its miſchievous influence, writes thus of it:

It would be endleſs to trace all the vice
That from the playhouſe takes immediate riſe.
It is the unexhauſted magazine
That ſtocks the land with vanity and ſin,
————By flouriſhing ſo long,
Numbers have been undone, both old and young;
And many hundred ſouls are now unbleſt,
Which elſe had dy'd in peace, and found eternal reſt.

As for any of my friends who are not yet convinced of the juſtice of theſe cenſures, I entreat them to read what Mr Collier, Mr Bedford, and Mr Lawe have written on this ſubject. And though I would by no means juſtify and ſupport every remark they have made, yet I think every reader who has a modeſt and pious ſoul, and has the cauſe of God and virtue near his heart, will be a little afraid to give his preſence there, leſt he ſhould ſeem to encourage ſuch incentives to iniquity and profaneneſs: or if he ſhould go thither once, merely to ſee and know what it is, I will perſuade myſelf he will not make it his practice, or frequent that houſe of infection.

But you will ſay, "There is ſome advantage to be "gained by theſe entertainments: there is a deal of "fine language in them, and faſhionable airs of con"verſation: there are many of the fooleries of life "expoſed in the theatre, which ſuit not a more ſo"lemn place; and comedies will teach us to know the "world, and to avoid the ridicule of the age."

But let my younger friends, who are ſo willing to improve in their knowledge of the world and politeneſs, remember, that whatſoever may be gotten, there

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is much more to be loſt among thoſe perilous and enticing ſcenes of vanity: the riſk of their virtue and ſerious religion can never be recompenſed by the learning a few fine ſpeeches and modeſt airs, or the correction of ſome awkward and unfaſhionable piece of behaviour. This is to plunge headlong into the ſea, that I may waſh off a little dirt from my coat, or to venture on poiſon in order to cure a pimple.

Beſides, moſt or all of theſe ends might be attained by reading ſome few of the beſt of them in private: though I confeſs, I am cautious how I recommend this practice, becauſe I think that almoſt all theſe dramatic compoſures in our age have ſome dangerous mixtures in them. Thoſe volumes of ſhort eſſays which are entitled the Spectator will give a ſufficient knowledge of the ways of the world, and cure us of a hundred little follies, without the danger that there is in reading of plays: though even in thoſe very volumes, I could heartily wiſh that here and there a leaf were left out, wherein the writers ſpeak too favourably of the ſtage, and now and then (though rarely) introduce a ſentence that would raiſe a bluſh in the face of ſtrict virtue.

2. The next forbidden diverſion is the maſquerade. By all the deſcriptions that I have heard of it, it ſeems to be a very low piece of foolery, fitted for children and for perſons of a little and trifling genius, who can entertain themſelves at blind-man's-buff. And as the entertainment is much meaner than that of the theatre, ſo it is ſomething more hazardous to virtue and innocence. It does not ſo much as pretend to any ſuch improvement of the mind as the theatre profeſſes; while it lays a more dreadful ſnare to modeſty, and has made too often a diſmal inroad on the morals of thoſe that frequent it. Could I but perſuade perſons to read what the Right Reverend the late Lord Biſhop of London has publiſhed, in his ſermon for the Reformation of Manners, I am ready to think that all thoſe who profeſs virtue would refrain their feet far from it, and not come near the doors of the houſe. His words are theſe:

" Amongſt the various engines contrived by a cor-
" rupt generation to ſupport vice and profaneneſs, and
" keep them in countenance, I muſt particularly take
" notice of maſquerades, as they deprive virtue and
" religion of their laſt refuge, I mean ſhame, which
" keeps multitudes of ſinners within the bounds of de-
" cency, after they have broken through all the ties
" of principle and conſcience. But this invention
" ſets them free from that tie alſo; being neither bet-
" ter nor worſe than an opportunity to ſay and do
" there, what virtue, decency, and good manners will
" not permit to be ſaid or done in any other place. If
" perſons of either ſex will frequent lewd and profane
" plays, or openly join themſelves to looſe and Atheiſti-
" cal aſſemblies of any kind, they have their reward,
" they are ſure to be marked and branded by all good
" men as perſons of corrupt minds and vicious incli-
" nations, who have abandoned religion and all pre-
" tences to it, and given themſelves over to luxury
" and profaneneſs. And as bad as the world is, this
" is a very heavy load upon the characters of men,
" and in ſpite of all the endeavours of vice to bear up
" and keep itſelf in countenance, it ſinks them by de-
" grees into infamy and contempt. But this perni-
" cious invention intrenches vice and profaneneſs a-
" gainſt all the aſſaults and impreſſions of ſhame: and
" whatever lewdneſs may be concerted, whatever luxu-
" ry, immodeſty, or extravagance may be committed
" in word or deed, no one's reputation is at ſtake, no
" one's character is reſponſible for it. A circum-
" ſtance of ſuch terrible conſequence to virtue and
" good manners, that if maſquerades ſhall ever be re-
" vived (as we heartily hope they will not) all ſerious
" Chriſtians within theſe two great and populous cities
" will be nearly concerned to lay it to heart, and dili-
" gently beſtir themſelves in cautioning their friends
" and neighbours againſt ſuch fatal ſnares. Particu-
" larly, all who have the government and education
" of youth ought to take the greateſt care to keep
" them out of the way of this dangerous temptation,
" and then to labour againſt the ſpreading of it.

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"I cannot forbear to add, that, all religious conſi-
"derations apart, this is a diverſion that no true Eng-
"liſhman ought to be fond of, when he remembers
"that it was brought in among us by the ambaſſador
"of a neighbouring nation in the laſt reign, while his
"maſter was in meaſures to enſlave us: and indeed
"there is not a more effectual way to enſlave a people,
"than firſt to diſpirit and enfeeble them by licen-
"tiouſneſs and effeminacy." Thus far the right re-
verend author, whoſe zeal for the ſuppreſſion of all
theſe tempting machineries has been ſo conſpicuous
and honourable.

3. The third place of dangerous reſort is the gam-
ing-table. Many young gentlemen have been there
bubbled and cheated of large ſums of money, which
were given them by their parents to ſupport them ho-
nourably in their ſtations. In ſuch ſort of ſhops, young
ladies are tempted to ſquander away too large a ſhare
of their yearly allowance, if not of the proviſion which
their parents have made for their whole lives. It is a
fatal ſnare to both ſexes: if they win, they are allured
ſtill onward, while, according to their language, luck
runs on their ſide: if they loſe, they are tempted to
another and another caſt of the die, and enticed on ſtill
to freſh games by a deluſive hope, that fortune will
turn, and they ſhall recover all that they have loſt. In
the midſt of theſe ſcenes their paſſions riſe ſhamefully,
a greedy deſire of gain makes them warm and eager,
and new loſſes plunge them ſometimes into vexation
and fury, till the ſoul is quite beaten off from its guard,
and virtue and reaſon have no manner of command
over them.

My worthy friend Mr Neal, in his reformation-
ſermon, has taken occaſion not only to inform us, that
"merchants and tradeſmen mix themſelves at theſe
"tables with men of deſperate fortunes, and throw the
"dice for their eſtates:" but in a very decent and
ſoft manner of addreſs has required, "Whether public
"gaming in virtuous ladies is not a little out of cha-
"racter? Whether it does not draw them into mixed
"company, and give them an air of boldneſs, which
"is perfectly inconſiſtent with that modeſty, which is

" the ornament of the fair ſex? Whether it does not " engage them in an habit of idleneſs, and of keeping " ill hours? Whether their paſſions are not ſometimes " diſordered? And whether the loſſes they ſuſtain " have not a tendency to breed ill blood in their fa- " milies, and between their neareſt relations? It has " been often obſerved, that gaming in a lady has uſu- " ally been attended with the loſs of reputation, and " ſometimes of that which is ſtill more valuable, her " virtue and honour." Thus far proceeds this uſeful ſermon.

Now if theſe be the diſmal and frequent conſequences of the gaming-table, the loſs of a little money is one of the leaſt injuries you ſuſtain by it. But what if you ſhould ſtill come off gainers? Is this the way that God has taught or allowed us to procure the neceſſary comforts of life? Is this a ſort of labour or traffic on which you can aſk the bleſſing of heaven? Can you liſt up your face to God, and pray, that he would ſucceed the caſt of the die, the drawing of the lot, or the dealing out of the cards, ſo as to increaſe your gain, while it is the very ſenſe and language of the prayer that your neighbour may ſuſtain ſo much loſs? This is a ſad and guilty circumſtance which belongs to gaming, that one can gain nothing but what another loſes; and conſequently, we cannot aſk a bleſſing upon ourſelves, but at the ſame time we pray for a blaſt upon our neighbour.

Will you hope to excuſe it by ſaying, that my neighbour conſents to this blaſt, or this loſs, by entering into the game, and there is no injury where there is conſent?

I anſwer, that though he conſents to loſe conditionally, and upon a venturous hope of gain, yet he is not willing to ſuſtain the loſs abſolutely; but when either chance, or his neighbour's ſkill in the game has determined againſt him, then he is conſtrained to loſe, and does it unwillingly; ſo that he ſtill ſuſtains it as a loſs, or misfortune, or evil. Now if you aſk a bleſſing from heaven on this way of your getting money, you aſk rather abſolutely that your neighbour may ſuſtain a loſs, without any regard to the condition of his hope of gain.

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Your wiſh and prayer is directly that you may get, and he may loſe: you cannot wiſh this good to yourſelf, but you wiſh the contrary evil to him: and therefore I think gaming for gain cannot be conſiſtent with the laws of Chriſt, which certainly forbid us to wiſh evil to our neighbour.

And if you cannot ſo much as in thought aſk God's bleſſing on this, as you certainly may on ſuch recreations as have an evident tendency innocently to exerciſe the body and relax the mind, it ſeems your conſcience ſecretly condemns it, and there is an additional proof of its being evil to you.

All the juſteſt writers of morality, and the beſt caſuiſts, have generally, if not univerſally, determined againſt theſe methods of gain. Whatſoever game may be indulged as lawful, it is ſtill as a recreation, and not as a calling or buſineſs of life: and therefore no larger ſums ought to be riſked or ventured in this manner than what may be lawfully laid out by any perſons for their preſent recreation, according to their different circumſtances in the world.

Beſides all this, think of the loſs of time, and the waſte of life that is continually made by ſome who frequent theſe gaming-places. Think how it calls away many a youth from their proper buſineſs, and tempts them to throw away what is not their own, and to riſk the ſubſtance, as well as the diſpleaſure of their parents, or of their maſter, at all the uncertain hazards of a dice-box. Read the pages which Mr Neal has employed on this theme, in the ſermon juſt now cited: read what Mr Dorrington has written ſeveral years ago on this ſubject of gaming: I wiſh ſuch diſcourſes were freſh in print, and put into the hands of every one who lies under this temptation.

4. The midnight-aſſemblies are the laſt which I ſhall mention of thoſe modiſh and hazardous diverſions, wherein youth are drawn away to much vanity, and plunged into the ſenſual gaieties of life; and that at thoſe hours, part of which ſhould be devoted to the religion of the family, or the cloſet, and partly to the nightly repoſe of nature. It is acknowledged to be proper and needful that young people ſhould be indulged

dulged in ſome recreations, agreeable to their age, and ſuitable to the condition in which Providence has placed them. But I would aſk whether the great and only valuable end of recreation is to be expected from theſe midnight-aſſemblies, namely, to relieve us from the fatigues of life, and to exhilarate the ſpirits, ſo as thereby to fit us for the duties of life and religion? Now are theſe the proper means to fit us for the duties of either kind? Perhaps it will be ſaid, that dancing, which is practiſed in thoſe aſſemblies, is an exerciſe conducive to health, and therefore a means of fitting us for the duties of life. But may not the unſeaſonableneſs of the midnight-hour prevent and over-balance the benefit that might otherwiſe be ſuppoſed to ariſe from the exerciſe? Is it likely that natural health ſhould be promoted, or preſerved, by changing the ſeaſons and order of nature, and by allotting thoſe hours to exerciſe which God and nature have ordained to reſt? Is the returning home after five or ſix hours dancing, through the cold and damp of the midnight-air, a proper means of preſerving health? or rather, is it not more likely to impair and deſtroy it? Have not theſe fatal effects been too often felt? Have there not been ſacrifices of human life offered to this midnight-idol? Have there been no fair young martyrs to this unſeaſonable folly? Are there not ſome of its ſlaves who are become feeble labouring under ſore diſeaſes, and ſome of them fallen aſleep in death? Have not their muſic and their dancing, inſtead of natural reſt in their beds, brought them down to a long ſilence in the grave, and an untimely reſt in a bed of duſt? Thoſe amiable pieces of human nature, who were lately the joy and hope of their too indulgent parents, are now the bitterneſs of their hearts; and thoſe very exerciſes from whence they hoped the continuance of their joy, as the ſuppoſed means of confirming their childrens health, are become an everlaſting ſpring of their mourning.

And as thoſe midnight-recreations are badly ſuited to fit us for the duties of the civil life, ſo they are worſe ſuited to fit us for, or rather, they are more apparently oppoſite to, the duties of religion. The religion of the cloſet is neglected, the beautiful regularity

ty and order of the family is broken; and when the night has been turned into day, a good part of the next day is turned into night, while the duties of the morning, both to God and man, are unperformed. Thoſe who have frequented theſe aſſemblies know all this, and are my witneſſes to the truth of it. Nay, the very practice itſelf, at thoſe unſeaſonable hours, tells all the world how much they prefer theſe dangerous amuſements to the worſhip of God in the evening, and in the morning, and to all the conveniencies and decorum of family-government. Beſides, if I ſpeak to Chriſtians, have you not found that the indulgence to this ſort of diverſions, which are uſually practiſed in thoſe unſeaſonable aſſemblies, leads the mind away inſenſibly from God and religion, gives a vanity to the ſpirit, and greatly abates the ſpiritual and heavenly temper which ſhould belong to Chriſtians? Hath it not taken away the favour of godlineſs and tincture of piety from ſome younger minds? And do elder Chriſtians never ſuffer by it? Let it be further conſidered what ſort of company you mingle with in thoſe midnight-aſſemblies. Are they moſt frequented by the wiſe and pious, or by the more vain and vicious part of mankind? Do they tend to fill your mind with the moſt improving notions, and your ears and your lips with the moſt proper converſation? Do you that frequent them never find your piety in danger there? Does ſtrict religion and prayer reliſh ſo well with you after thoſe gaudy nights of mirth and folly? And do you then, when you join in theſe aſſemblies, practiſe the commands of God, to abſtain from all appearance of evil, and to ſhun the paths of temptation? Can you pray for a bleſſing on your attendance on theſe midnight meetings? Or can you hope to run into the midſt of thoſe ſparks and living coals, and yet not be burned, nor ſo much as have your garments ſinged? Are not parents very generally ſenſible, that there are dangerous ſnares to youth in thoſe gay diverſions? And therefore the mother will herſelf go along with her young offſpring, to take care of them, and to watch over them; and perhaps there is ſcarcely any place or time which more wants the watchful eye of a ſuperior. But here let

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me aſk, is this all the reaſon why the mother attends thoſe ſcenes of vanity? Has ſhe no reliſh for them herſelf? Has ſhe no gay humours of her own to be gratified, which ſhe diſguiſes and covers with the pretence of a parental ſolitude for the virtue and honour of her offspring? Are there no mothers who freely lead their children into thoſe perilous places, where ſoul and body are in danger, and are really their tempters, under a colour of being their guardians?

You will plead, perhaps, that ſome of theſe things are proper for the improvement of young people in good-breeding and politeneſs. They muſt be brought into company, to ſee the world, and to learn how to behave with becoming decency. Well, ſuppoſe theſe aſſemblies to be academies of politeneſs, and that young people attend there upon lectures of good-breeding, Is there no other time ſo fit as midnight, to poliſh the youth of both ſexes, and to breed them well? May not an hour or two be appointed, at more proper ſeaſons, by ſelect companies, for mutual converſation and innocent delight? Can there be no genteel recreations enjoyed, no leſſons of behaviour taught by day-light? Can no method of improvement in good-breeding be contrived and appointed, which ſhall be more ſecure from temptations and inconveniencies? Are there none which are more harmleſs, more innocent, of better reputation among perſons of ſtrict piety, and which make leſs inroads on the duties of life, both ſolitary and ſocial, civil and religious?

Shall I inquire once more, what is done at many of thoſe midnight-aſſemblies, before the dance is begun, or when it is ended, and what is the entertainment of thoſe who are not engaged in dancing? Are they not active in gaming? Are not cards the buſineſs of the hour? Are not children educated, by this means, in the love of gaming? And do they not hereby get ſuch a reliſh of it, as proves afterwards pernicious to them? Now if gaming be not a practice fit to be encouraged, what encouragement do thoſe aſſemblies deſerve where gaming is one of the chief diverſions or buſineſs?

But it is time to put an end to this ſort of diſcourſe. I beg pardon of my readers for having drawn it out

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to ſo great a length: for I have ſaid too much on this ſubject for thoſe who have no inclination to theſe criminal and dangerous diverſions: and I wiſh I may have ſaid enough to do good to thoſe who have.

Upon the whole, I conclude, it is the duty of parents who would give their children a good education to ſee to it that children, in their younger years, do not indulge ſuch recreations as may ſpoil all the good effects of the pious inſtructions, the prayers, and care of their parents. Otherwiſe, if you encourage them in ſuch recreations, you are building up thoſe vanities of mind, and thoſe vicious inclinations with one hand, which you labour to prevent or to deſtroy with the other.

SECT. X.

Of the proper Degrees of Liberty and Reſtraint in the Education of a Son, illuſtrated by Example.

SO weak and unhappy is human nature, that is is ever ready to run into extremes; and when we would recover ourſelves from an exceſs on the right hand, we know not where to ſtop till we are got to an exceſs on the left. Inſtances of this kind are innumerable in all the affairs of human life; but it is hardly more remarkable in any thing, than in the ſtrict and ſevere education of our fathers a century ago, and in the moſt profuſe and unlimited liberty that is indulged to children in our age.

In thoſe days, the ſons were bred up to learning by terrible diſcipline: every Greek and Latin author they converſed with was attended with one or many new ſcourges, to drive them into acquaintance with him; and not the leaſt miſdemeanor in life could eſcape the laſh, as though the father would prove his daily love to his ſon by never ſparing his rod, Prov. xiii. 24. Now-a-days young maſter muſt be treated with a fooliſh fondneſs, till he is grown to the ſize of man; and let his faults be ever ſo heinous, and his obſtinacy ever ſo great, yet the preceptor muſt not let him hear the name of the rod, leſt the child ſhould be frighted or hurt; the advice of the wiſeſt of men is utterly forgotten, when

when he tells us, "that due correction ſhall drive out the folly that is bound up in the heart of a child," Prov. xxii. 15. Or elſe they boldly reverſe his divine counſel, Prov. xiii. 24. as though they would make the rule of their practice a direct contradiction to the words of Solomon, namely, He that ſpareth the rod loveth his ſon, but he that hateth him chaſtens him betimes.

In that day, many children were kept in a moſt ſervile ſubjection, and not ſuffered to ſit down, or to ſpeak, in the preſence of their father, till they were come to the age of one-and-twenty. The leaſt degree of freedom was eſteemed a bold preſumption, and incurred a ſharp reproof. Now they are made familiar companions to their parents, almoſt from the very nurſery; and therefore they will hardly bear a check or rebuke at their hand.

In the beginning of the laſt century, and ſo onward to the middle of it, the children were uſually obliged to believe what their parents and their maſters taught them, whether they were principles of ſcience, or articles of faith and practice: they were tied down almoſt to every punctilio, as though it were neceſſary to ſalvation; they were not ſuffered to examine or inquire whether their teachers were in the right, and ſcarcely knew upon what grounds they were to aſſent to the things that were taught them; for it was a maxim of all teachers, that the learner muſt believe: *Diſcentem oportet credere.* Then an *ipſe dixit*, or Ariſtotle ſaid ſo, was a ſufficient proof of any propoſition in the colleges; and for a man of five-and-twenty to be a Chriſtian and a Proteſtant, a Diſſenter or a Churchman, it was almoſt reaſon enough to ſay that his father was ſo. But in this century, when the doctrine of a juſt and reaſonable liberty is better known, too many of the preſent youth break all the bonds of nature and duty, and run to the wildeſt degrees of looſeneſs, both in belief and practice. They ſlight the religion which their parents have taught them, that they may appear to have choſen a religion for themſelves: and when they have made a creed or belief of their own, or rather borrowed ſome ſcraps of infidelity from their vain companions and equals, they find pretences

enough to caſt off all other creeds at once, as well as the counſels and cuſtoms of their religious predeceſſors.

"The practices of our fathers (ſay they) were pre-
"ciſe and fooliſh, and ſhall be no rule for our con-
"duct; the articles of their faith were abſurd and
"myſterious, but we will believe nothing of myſtery,
"leſt our faith ſhould be as ridiculous as theirs." In their younger years, and before their reaſon is half grown, they pretend to examine the ſublimeſt doctrines of Chriſtianity; and a raw and half-witted boy ſhall commence an Infidel, becauſe he cannot comprehend ſome of the glorious truths of the goſpel; and laughs at his elders and his anceſtors for believing what they could not comprehend.

The child now-a-days forgets that his parent is obliged, by all the laws of God and nature, to train him up in his own religion, till he is come to the proper age of diſcretion to judge for himſelf; he forgets, or he will not know, that the parent is intruſted with the care of the ſouls of his young offspring by the very laws of nature, as well as by the revealed covenants of innocency and of grace. The ſon now-a-days forgets the obligations he is under to honour and obey the perſons that gave him birth; he pays no regard to the doctrines which led on his anceſtors to the love of God and man; whereas doctrines that have ſuch influence claim at leaſt ſome degrees of attention, and eſpecially from a ſon who has been trained up in them, and beheld the effect of them in the piety of his parents; nor will the very light of nature ſuffer him to depart from them, but upon the cleareſt judgment of his own mature reaſon, a thorough and impartial ſearch into the ſubject, the loud inward dictates of his conſcience, and the full evidence of his parents miſtake.

So wanton and licentious a ſpirit has poſſeſſed ſome of the youth of the nation, that they never think they have freed themſelves from the prejudices of their education, till they have thrown off almoſt all the yokes of reſtraint that were laid upon them by God or man. Some take a petulant pride in laying aſide the holy ſcriptures, for the ſame reaſon that Timothy was adviſed

vised to continue in them; and that is, because they have learned and known them from their very childhood, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And some, perhaps, have been laughed out of their Christianity, lest it should be said their mothers and their nurses had made them Christians.

Heretofore the sons were scarcely suffered to be absent from home an hour, without express leave, till they were arrived at the age of man, nor daughters till they were married; now both sexes take an unbounded licence of roving where they please, and from a dozen years old, they forget to ask leave to wander or to visit where their fancies lead them: at first the parent gives a loose and winks at it, and then the child claims it as his due for ever.

In short, the last age taught mankind to believe that they were mere children, and treated them as such, till they were near thirty years old; but the present gives them leave to fancy themselves complete men and women at twelve or fifteen; and they accordingly judge and manage for themselves entirely, and too often despise all advice of their elders.

Now, though it be sufficiently evident that both these are extremes of liberty or restraint, yet if we judge by the reason of things, or by experience and success, surely the ancient education is to be preferred before the present, and of the two should rather be chosen.

If we would determine this by reason, it is easy to see that a father of fifty or sixty years old is fitter to judge for his son at four and-twenty, in many matters of importance, than a boy of fifteen is to judge for himself.

Or, if we would decide the matter by experience, it is plain enough that the posterity of the former generation (who are the fathers and the grandfathers of the present), had more of serious religion and true virtue amongst them, than there is any hope or prospect of among the greatest part of their children and grandchildren. And if I would use a bold metaphor, I might venture to say with truth, the last century has brought forth more solid fruits of goodness than the present

preſent can yet ſhow in bloſſoms; and in my opinion, this is much owing to the neglect of the pruning-knife.

But after all, is there no medium between theſe two extremes, exceſs of confinement, and exceſs of liberty? May not young underſtandings be allowed to ſhoot and ſpread themſelves a little, without growing rank and rampant? May not children be kept in a due and gentle ſubjection to their parents, without putting yokes of bondage on them? Is there no reaſonable reſtraint of the wild opinions and violent inclinations of youth, without making chains for the underſtanding, and throwing fetters on the ſoul? May not the young gentleman begin to act like a man, without forgetting that he is a ſon? and maintain the full liberty of his own judgment, without inſolence and contempt of the opinions of his elders? May not he who is bred up a Proteſtant and a Chriſtian judge freely for himſelf, without the prejudices of his education, and yet continue a Chriſtian and a Proteſtant ſtill? Is it not poſſible for the parent to indulge, and the child to enjoy, a juſt liberty, and yet neither encourage nor practiſe a wild licentiouſneſs?

Yes, ſurely; and there have been happy inſtances in the laſt age, and there are ſome in this, both of parents and children, that have learned to tread this middle path, and found wiſdom and virtue in it, piety and peace. Agathus has bred his ſons up under ſuch diſcipline, as renders them both proper examples to the world.

Eugenio is juſt out of his minority, and in the twenty-ſecond year of his age he practiſes the man with all that virtue and decency which makes his father's acquaintance covet his company; and indeed they may learn by his diſcourſe the art of good reaſoning, as well as the precepts of piety, from his example. He is an entertaining companion to the gay young gentlemen his equals; and yet divines and philoſophers take a pleaſure to have Eugenio amongſt them. He is careſſed by his ſuperiors in honour and years; and though he is releaſed from the diſcipline of parental education, yet he treats the lady his mother with all that affec-

tionate duty that could be desired or demanded of him ten years ago: his father is content to see his own youth outshined by his son, and confesses that Eugenio already promises greater things than Agathus did at thirty.

If you ask whence these happy qualities arise, I grant there was some foundation for them in the very make of his nature; there was something of a complexional virtue mingled with his frame; but it is much more owing to the wise conduct of his parents from his very infancy, and the blessing of divine grace attending their labours, their prayers, and their hopes.

He was trained up from the very cradle to all the duties of infant-virtue, by the allurements of love and remark, suited to his age; and never was driven to practise any thing by a frown or a hasty word, where it was possible for kinder affections to work the same effect by indulgence and delay.

As fast as his reasoning powers began to appear and exert themselves, they were conducted in an easy track of thought, to find out and observe the reasonableness of every part of his duty, and the lovely character of a child obedient to reason and to his parents will; while every departure from duty was shewn to be so contrary to reason, as laid an early foundation for conscience to work upon: conscience began here to assume its office, and to manifest its authority in dictates, and reproofs, and reflections of mind, peaceful or painful, according to his behaviour. When his parents observed this inward monitor to awake in his soul, they could better trust him out of their sight.

When he became capable of conceiving of an almighty and invisible Being, who made this world and every creature in it, he was taught to pay all due regard to this God his Maker; and from the authority and love of his father on earth, he was led to form right ideas (as far as childhood permitted) of the power, government, and goodness of the universal and supreme Father of all heaven.

He was informed why punishment was due to an offence against God or his parents, that his fear might become a useful passion to awaken and guard his virtue;

tue; but he was inſtructed, at the ſame time, that where he heartily repented of a fault, and returned to his duty with new diligence, there was forgiveneſs to be obtained both of God and man.

When at any time a friend interceded for him to his father, after he had been guilty of a fault, he was hereby directed into the doctrine of Jeſus the Mediator between God and man; and thus he knew him as an interceſſor, before he could well underſtand the notion of his ſacrifice and atonement.

In his younger years he paſſed but twice under the correction of the rod; once for a fit of obſtinacy and perſiſting in a falſehood; then he was given up to ſevere chaſtiſement, and it diſpelled and cured the ſullen humour for ever; and once for the contempt of his mother's authority he endured the ſcourge again, and he wanted it no more.

He was enticed ſometimes to the love of letters, by making his leſſon a reward of ſome domeſtic duty; and a permiſſion to purſue ſome parts of learning was the appointed recompence of his diligence and improvement in others.

There was nothing required of his memory but what was firſt (as far as poſſible) let into his underſtanding: and by proper images and repreſentations, ſuited to his years, he was taught to form ſome conception of the things deſcribed, before he was bid to learn the words by heart. Thus he was freed from the danger of treaſuring up the cant and jargon of mere names, inſtead of the riches of ſolid knowledge.

Where any abſtruſe and difficult notions occurred in his courſe of learning, his preceptor poſtponed them till he had gone through that ſubject in a more ſuperficial way; for this purpoſe he paſſed twice through all the ſciences: and to make the doctrines of Chriſtianity eaſy to him in his childhood, he had two or three catechiſms compoſed by his tutor, each of them ſuited to his more early or more improved capacity, till at twelve years old he was thought fit to learn that public form, which is more univerſally taught and approved.

As he was inured to reaſoning from his childhood, ſo he was inſtructed to prove every thing, according to the nature of the ſubject, by natural or moral arguments, as far as his years would admit: and thus he drew much of his early knowledge from reaſon, or from revelation, by the force of his judgment, and not merely from his teachers by the ſtrength of his memory.

His parents were perſuaded indeed that they ought to teach him the principles of virtue while he was a child; and the moſt important truths of religion, both natural and revealed, before he was capable of deriving them from the fund of his own reaſon; or of framing a religion for himſelf out of ſo large a book as the Bible. They thought themſelves under the obligation of that divine command, "train up a child in the way that he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," Prov. xxii. 6. And therefore from a child they made him acquainted with the holy ſcriptures, and perſuaded him to believe that they were given by the inſpiration of God, before it was poſſible for him to take in the arguments from reaſon, hiſtory, tradition, &c. which muſt be joined together to confirm the ſacred canon, and prove the ſeveral books of the Bible to be divine. Thus, like Timothy, he continued in the things which he had learned, and had been aſſured of, knowing of whom he had learned them, 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15, 16. Yet as his years advanced, they thought it requiſite to ſhow him the ſolid and rational foundations of his faith, that his hope might be built upon the authority of God, and not of men.

Thus the apoſtles and prophets were made his early companions: and being inſtructed in the proofs of the Chriſtian religion, and the divine original of his Bible, he pays a more conſtant and ſacred regard to it, ſince his judgment and reaſon aſſure him that it is the word of God, than when he was a child, and believed it becauſe his mother told him ſo. He reads the ſcriptures daily now, not like the leſſons of his infancy, but as the infallible rule of his faith and practice: he ſearches them every day in his cloſet, not to confirm any articles and doctrines that he is reſolved to believe, but

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(as the noble Bereans did) to examine and try whether those doctrines and articles ought to be believed or no, which he was taught in the nursery.

After he arrived at fifteen, he was suffered to admit nothing into his full assent, till his mind saw the rational evidence of the proposition itself; or at least till he felt the power of those reasons which obliged him to assent upon moral evidence and testimony, where the evidences of sense or of reason were not to be expected. He knew that he was not to hope for mathematical proofs that there is a pope at Rome, that the Turks have dominion over Judea, that St Paul wrote an epistle to the Romans, that Christ was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, and that in three days time he rose from the dead; and yet that there is just and reasonable evidence to enforce and support the belief of all these. Where truths were too sublime for present comprehension, he would never admit them a a part of his faith, till he saw full evidence of a speaking God, and a divine revelation.

His tutor never imposed any thing on him with a magisterial air, but by way of advice recommended to him such studies and such methods of improvement as his experience had long approved; he gave frequent hints of the danger of some opinions, and the fatal consequences of some modish and mistaken principles. He let him know generally what sentiments he himself embraced among the divided opinions of the age: and what clear and comprehensive knowledge, what satisfaction of judgment, serenity of mind, and peace of conscience, were to be found in the principles which he had chosen; but he exhorted his pupil still to choose wisely for himself, and led him onward in the sciences, and in common and sacred affairs, to frame his own sentiments by just rules of reasoning: though Eugenio did not superstitiously confine his belief to the opinions of his instructor, yet he could not but love the man that indulged him in such a liberty of thought, and gave him such an admirable clue, by which he let himself into the secrets of knowledge, human and divine: thus under the happy and insensible influences of so prudent a supervisor, he traced the paths of learning,

ing, and enjoyed the unſpeakable pleaſure of being his own teacher, and of framing his opinions himſelf. By this means he began early to uſe his reaſon with freedom, and to judge for himſelf, without a ſervile ſubmiſſion to the authority of others; and yet to pay a juſt and ſolemn deference to perſons of age and experience, and particularly to thoſe who were the proper and appointed guides of his youth, and who led him on ſo gently in the paths of knowledge.

He loves to call himſelf by the honourable name of a Chriſtian: and though his particular ſentiments approach much nearer to the opinions of ſome parties than to others, yet he likes not to be called by the name of any party, for he is wiſe and bold enough to be a bigot to none. He practiſes a noble and an extenſive charity to thoſe that, in leſſer matters, differ widely from him, if they do but maintain the moſt eſſential and neceſſary parts of Chriſtianity; nor does he ſeclude them from his communion, nor withhold himſelf from theirs; but as the providence of God gives him juſt occaſions, he eats and drinks with them at the table of their common Lord, provided always that they impoſe nothing upon his practice contrary to his conſcience.

Yet his charity has its limits too: for he hardly knows how to worſhip the Son of God in the moſt ſolemn ordinance of communion, with thoſe that eſteem him but a mere man; nor can he join with an aſſembly of profeſſed Socinians to commemorate the death of Chriſt, who deny it to be a proper atonement for the ſins of men.

He dares to believe the doctrines of original ſin, the ſatisfaction of Chriſt, the influences of the bleſſed Spirit, and other deſpiſed truths of the goſpel; and this not becauſe his anceſtors believed them, but becauſe he cannot avoid the evidence of them in ſcripture. And if in ſome few points of leſs importance he takes leave to differ from the ſentiments of his elders, it is with ſuch a becoming modeſty, that convinces his father how unwilling he is to diſſent from him; and yet he maintains his opinion with ſuch an appearance of argument, and ſuch an honeſt concern for truth and piety,

piety, that makes it plain to his friends, that he is under the ſtrong conſtraint of an inward conviction. Thus, though he has perhaps ſome new apprehenſions of things, yet he is by no means led into them by a licentious humour of oppoſing his teachers, nor a wanton pride of free-thinking.

He was not kept a ſtranger to the errors and follies of mankind, nor was he let looſe amongſt them, either in books or in company, without a guard and a guide. His preceptor let him know the groſs miſtakes and iniquities of men, ancient and modern, but inlaid him with proper principles of truth and virtue, and furniſhed him with ſuch rules of judgment, as led him more eaſily to diſtinguiſh between good and bad; and thus he was ſecured againſt the infection and the poiſon, both of the living and the dead.

He had early cautions given him to avoid the bantering tribe of mortals, and was inſtructed to diſtinguiſh a jeſt from an argument, ſo that a loud laugh at his religion never puts him nor his faith out of countenance. He is ever ready to render a reaſon of his Chriſtian hope, and to defend his creed; but he ſeems to enter the liſts with ſuch a diſputant that has no artillery but ſquib and flaſh, no arguments beſides grimace and ridicule. Thus he ſupports the character of a Chriſtian with honour; he confines his faith to his Bible, and his practice to all the rules of piety; and yet thinks as freely as that vain herd of Atheiſts and Deiſts who arrogate the name of Free thinkers to themſelves.

You will inquire, perhaps, how he came to attain ſo manly a conduct in life at ſo early an age, and how every thing of the boy was worn off ſo ſoon. Truly, beſides other influences, it is much owing to the happy management of Lraile (that was the name of the lady his mother), ſhe was frequent in the nurſery, and inſpired ſentiments into his childhood becoming riper years. When there was company in the parlour, with whom ſhe could uſe ſuch a freedom, ſhe brought her ſon in among them, not to entertain them with his own noiſe, and tattle, and impertinence, but to hear their diſcourſe, and ſometimes to anſwer a little queſtion

tion or two they might ask him. When he was grown up to a youth, he was often admitted into the room with his father's acquaintance, and was indulged the liberty to ask and inquire on subjects that seemed to be above his years: he was encouraged to speak a sentence or two of his own thoughts, and thus to learn and practise a modest assurance. But when the company was gone, he was approved and praised if he behaved well, or received kind hints of admonition that he might know when he had been too silent, and when too forward to speak. Thus by enjoying the advantage of society above the level of his own age and understanding, he was always aspiring to imitation; and the excesses and defects of his conduct were daily noticed and cured.

His curiosity was gratified abroad with new sights and scenes, as often as his parents could do it with convenience, that he might not stare and wonder at every strange object or occurrence; but he was made patient of restraint and disappointment, when he seemed to indulge an excessive desire of any needless diversion. If he sought any criminal pleasures, or diversions attended with great danger and inconvenience, the pursuit of them was absolutely forbidden; but it was done in so kind a manner, as made the guilt or peril of them appear in the strongest light, and thereby they were rendered hateful or formidable, rather than the objects of wish or desire.

When Eugenio first began to go abroad in the world, his companions were recommended to him by the prudence of his parents; or if he chose them himself, it was still within the reach of his tutor's observation, or the notice of his father's eye: nor was he suffered to run loose into promiscuous company, till it appeared that his mind was furnished with steady principles of virtue; till he had knowledge enough to defend those principles, and to repel the assaults that might be made upon his faith. And for this reason, till he was twenty years old, he gave account to his superiors how he spent the day, whensoever he was absent from them; though they did not at that age require that he should ask formal leave for a few hours excursion.

Yet

Yet it was hardly thought fit to truſt him to his own conduct for whole days together, leſt he ſhould meet with temptations too hard for his virtue, till he had gained reſolution enough to ſay NO boldly, and to maintain an obſtinate refuſal of pernicious pleaſures. He was told before-hand how the profane and the lewd would uſe all the arts of addreſs, and how ſubtilly they would practiſe upon his good humour with powerful and tempting importunities. This ſet him ever upon his guard, and though he carried his ſweetneſs of temper always about with him, yet he learned to conceal it whereſoever it was neither proper nor ſafe to appear. By a little converſe in the world, he found that it was neceſſary to be poſitive, bold, and unmoveable in rejecting every propoſal which might endanger his character or his morals; eſpecially as he ſoon became ſenſible that a ſoft and cold denial gave courage to new attacks, and left him liable to be teaſed with freſh ſolicitations. He laid down this therefore for a conſtant rule, that where his reaſon had determined any practice to be either plainly ſinful, or utterly inexpedient, he would give ſo firm a denial, upon the principles of virtue and religion, as ſhould forever diſcourage any further ſolicitations. This gave him the character of a man of reſolute virtue, even among the rakes of the time, nor was he ever eſteemed the leſs on this account. At firſt indeed he thought it a happy victory which he had gotten over himſelf, when he could defy the ſhame of the world, and reſolve to be a Chriſtian in the face of vice and infidelity: he found the ſhorteſt way to conquer this fooliſh ſhame, was to renounce it at once: then it was eaſy to practiſe ſingularity amidſt a profane multitude. And when he began to get courage enough to profeſs reſolute piety without a bluſh, in the midſt of ſuch company as this, Agathus and Eraſte then permitted their ſon to travel abroad, and to ſee more of the world, under the protection of their daily prayers. His firſt tour was through the neighbouring counties of England; he afterward enlarged the circuit of his travels, till he had viſited foreign nations, and learned the value of his own.

In

In ſhort, the reſtraints of his younger years were tempered with ſo much liberty, and managed with ſuch prudence and tenderneſs, and theſe bonds of diſcipline were ſo gradually looſened, as faſt as he grew wiſe enough to govern himſelf, that Eugenio always carried about with him an inward conviction of the great love and wiſdom of his parents and his tutor. The humours of the child now and then felt ſome reluctance againſt the pious diſcipline of his elders: but now he is arrived at manhood, there is nothing that he looks back upon with greater ſatisfaction than the ſteps of their conduct, and the inſtances of his own ſubmiſſion. He often recounts theſe things with pleaſure, as ſome of the chief favours of heaven, whereby he was guarded through all the dangers and follies of youth and childhood, and effectually kept, through divine grace operating by theſe happy means, from a thouſand ſorrows, and perhaps from everlaſting ruin.

Though he has been releaſed ſome years from the ſtrictneſs of paternal government, yet he ſtill makes his parents his choſen friends: and though they ceaſe to practiſe authority upon him and abſolute command, yet he pays the utmoſt deference to their counſels, and to the firſt notice of their inclinations. You ſhall never find him reſiſting and debating againſt their deſires and propenſities in little common things of life, which are indifferent in themſelves; he thinks it carries in it too much contempt of thoſe whom God and nature requires him to honour. In thoſe inſtances of practice which they utterly forbid in their family, he bears ſo tender a regard to their peace, that he will ſcarcely ever allow himſelf in them, even when he cannot ſee ſufficient reaſon to pronounce them unlawful. Nor does he pay this regard to his parents alone, but denies himſelf in ſome gratifications which he eſteems innocent, out of regard to what he accounts the miſtaken judgment of ſome pious perſons with whom he converſes and worſhips. They are weak, perhaps, in their auſterities; but St Paul has taught him, that the ſtrong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe themſelves to the offence of the church of God. This he obſerved to be the conſtant practice

of Agathus and Eraſte, and he maintains a great regard to the examples of ſo much piety and goodneſs, even though his reaſon does not lead him always to embrace their opinions. Whenſoever he enters into an important action of life, he takes a filial pleaſure to ſeek advice from his worthy parents, and it is uneaſy to him to attempt any thing of moment without it. He does not indeed univerſally practiſe all their ſentiments, but he gains their conſent to follow his own reaſon and choice.

Some of the wild young gentlemen of the age may happen to laugh at him for being ſo much a boy ſtill, and for ſhewing ſuch ſubjection to the old folks (as they call them): with a ſcornful ſmile they bid him "Break off his leading-ſtrings, and caſt away his yokes "of bondage." But for the moſt part he obſerves, that theſe ſame perſons ſhake off all yokes at once, and at once break the bonds of nature, duty, and religion: they pay but little regard to their ſuperior in heaven, any more than to thoſe on earth, and have forgotten God and their parents together. "Nor will I ever be "moved (ſays he) with the reproaches of thoſe who "make a jeſt of things ſacred as well as civil, and treat "their mother and their Maker with the ſame con-"tempt."

SECT. XI.

Of the Proper Degrees of Liberty and Reſtraint in the Education of Daughters, illuſtrated by Examples.

IT is neceſſary that youth ſhould be laid under ſome reſtraint. When our inclinations are violent, and our judgment weak, it was a wiſe proviſion of God our Creator, that we ſhould be under the conduct of thoſe who were born before us; and that we ſhould be bound to obey them, who have an innate ſolicitude for our happineſs, and are much fitter to judge for our advantage, than we ourſelves can be in that early part of life.

But it may be ſaid, liberty is ſo glorious a bleſſing, that ſurely it ought not utterly to be taken away from

the young, leſt their ſpirits be cramped and enſlaved, and the growth of their ſouls ſo ſtinted by a narrow and ſevere reſtraint, that they act all their lives like children under age. Or ſometimes a too rigid confinement will have the contrary effect, and make the impatience of youth break out beyond all bounds, as ſoon as ever they get the firſt reliſh of freedom.

But O how exceedingly difficult it is to hit the middle way! How hard for parents to manage their own authority with ſo much gentleneſs, and to regulate the liberties of their children with ſo wiſe a diſcipline, as to fall into neither extreme, nor give unhappy occaſion for cenſure! though I have ſpoken my opinion freely, that it is ſafer to err on the ſide of reſtraint, than of exceſſive indulgence.

Antigone had an excellent mother, but ſhe died young: Antigone, with her elder ſiſter, from their very infancy, were placed under a grandmother's care. The good old gentlewoman trained them up preciſely in the forms in which ſhe herſelf was educated, when the modes of breeding had (it muſt be confeſſed) too much narrowneſs and auſterity. She gave them all the good inſtructions ſhe had received from her anceſtors, and would ſcarcely ever ſuffer them to be out of her ſight. She ſaw the eldeſt well married at five-and-twenty, and ſettled in a courſe of virtue and religion: ſhe found her zeal and pious care attended with ſucceſs in ſeveral of her poſterity, and ſhe departed this life in peace.

But unhappy Antigone took a different turn: ſhe was let looſe into the world with all her poſſeſſions and powers in her own hand; and falling into vain company, ſhe got ſuch a taſte of unbounded liberty and modiſh vices, that ſhe could never reflect upon the method of her own education without angry remarks of ridicule.

When ſhe came to have children of her own, ſhe ſtill retained the reſentment which ſhe had conceived at the conduct of her grandmother, and therefore ſhe reſolved that her daughters ſhould be bred up in the other extreme.

"In my younger times (ſaid ſhe) we were kept "hard to the labour of the needle, and ſpent ſix hours "a-day

" a-day at it, as though I were to get my bread by " my fingers ends; but a little of that buſineſs ſhall " ſerve theſe children, for their father has left them " good fortunes of their own.

" We were not ſuffered to read any thing but the " Bible and ſermon-books; but I ſhall teach mine po- " liter leſſons out of plays and romances, that they " may be acquainted with the world betimes.

" My eldeſt ſiſter was ſcarcely ever allowed to ſpeak " in company till ſhe was married, and it was a tire- " ſome length of years before that day came. The " old proverb ran thus, That a maiden muſt be ſeen, " and not heard: but I hope my little daughters will " not be dumb.

" We were always confined to dwell at home, un- " leſs ſome extraordinary occaſion called us abroad, " perhaps once in a month, or twice in a ſummer. " We were taught to play the good houſewife in the " kitchen and the paſtry, and were well inſtructed in " the conduct of the broom and duſter; but we knew " nothing of the mode of the court, and the diver- " ſions of the town. I ſhould be aſhamed to ſee theſe " young creatures that are under my care ſo awk- " ward in company at fourteen, as I was at four-and- " twenty."

And thus Antigone brought up her young family of daughters agreeable to her own looſe notions; for ſhe had formed her ſentiments of education merely from the averſion ſhe had conceived to the way of her elders, and choſe the very reverſe of their conduct for her rule, becauſe their piety and wiſdom had a little allay of rigour and ſtiffneſs attending it.

The young things, under their mother's eye, could manage the tea-table at ten years old, when they could hardly read a chapter in the New Teſtament. At fourteen they learned the airs of the world; they gad abroad at their pleaſure, and will hardly ſuffer Antigone to direct them or go with them; they deſpiſe the old woman betimes, for they can viſit without her attendance, and prattle abundantly without her prompting.

She led or ſent them to the playhouſe twice or thrice a-week, where a great part of their natural modeſty is worn off and forgotten: modeſty, the guard of youthful virtue! they can talk love-ſtories out of Cleopatra; they are well practiſed already in the arts of ſcandal, and for want of better furniture of mind, emptineſs and impertinence, ribbands and faſhions, gay gentlemen and wanton ſongs, ever dwell upon their tongues. They have been taught ſo little to ſet a guard upon themſelves, that their virtue is much ſuſpected. But (be that as it will) they are ſeized and married before ſixteen, being tempted away to bind themſelves for life to a laced coat and a faſhionable wig. Thus children ſet up at once to govern a family, but ſo ignorant in all thoſe concerns, that, from the garret to the kitchen, the whole houſe is entirely ruled by the humour of the ſervants, becauſe the young miſtreſs knows not how to inſtruct or correct them. There is neither religion nor prudence among them, at home or abroad. Thus they make haſte to ruin and miſery in this world, without thought or hope of the world to come, and the heaven or the hell that await us there.

Antigone ſees her own miſtake too late; and though ſhe has not ſo juſt a ſenſe and horror of their looſe and profane life as would become her years, yet ſhe is vexed to ſee herſelf neglected ſo ſoon, and ſcorned by her own children; but ſhe confeſſes, with a ſigh, that ſhe has led them the way, by laughing ſo often at her good old grandmother.

How much wiſer is Phroniſſa in the education that ſhe gives her daughters, who maintains a happy medium between the ſeverity of the laſt age, and the wild licence of this! She manages her conduct towards them with ſuch an admirable felicity, that though ſhe confines them within the ſacred limits of virtue and religion, yet they have not a wiſh beyond the liberties which they daily enjoy.

Phroniſſa, when her daughters were little children, uſed to ſpend ſome hours daily in the nurſery, and taught the young creatures to recite many a pretty paſſage out of the Bible, before they were capable of reading

reading it themſelves; yet at ſix years old they read the ſcriptures with eaſe, and then they rejoiced to find the ſame ſtories in Geneſis and in the goſpels which their mother had taught them before. As their years advanced, they were admitted into the beſt converſation, and had ſuch books put into their hands, as might acquaint them with the rules of prudence and piety in an eaſy and familiar way: the reading the lives of eminent perſons who were examples of this kind, was one of the daily methods ſhe uſed, at once to inſtruct and entertain them. By ſuch means, and others which ſhe wiſely adapted to their advancing age, they had all the knowledge beſtowed upon them that could be ſuppoſed proper for women, and that might render their character honourable and uſeful in the world.

As for plays and romances, they were ever bred up in a juſt apprehenſion of the danger and miſchief of them: Collier's view of the ſtage was early put into their cloſets, that they might learn there the hideous immorality and profaneneſs of the Engliſh comedies; and by the way, he forbids us to hope from our tragical poets a much ſafer entertainment. There they might read enough to forbid their attendances on the playhouſe, and ſee the poiſon expoſed, without danger of the infection. The ſervants that waited on them, and the books that were left within their reach, were ſuch as never corrupted their minds with impure words or images.

Long has Phroniſſa known that domeſtic virtues are the buſineſs and the honour of her ſex. Nature and hiſtory agree to aſſure her, that the conduct of the houſehold is committed to the women, and the precepts and examples of ſcripture confirm it. She educated her daughters therefore in conſtant acquaintance with all family affairs, and they knew betimes what belonged to the proviſions of the table, and the furniture of every room. Though her circumſtances were conſiderable in the world, yet, by her own example, ſhe made her children know, that a frequent viſit to the kitchen was not beneath their ſtate, nor the common menial affairs too mean for their notice; that they might be able hereafter to manage their own houſe, and not be

directed, imposed upon, and perhaps ridiculed by their own servants.

They were initiated early in the science of the needle, and were bred up skilful in all the plain and flowery arts of it; but it was never made a task nor a toil to them, nor did they waste their hours in those nice and tedious works, which cost our female ancestors seven years of their life, and stitches without number. To render this exercise pleasant, one of them always entertained the company with some useful author, while the rest were at work; every one had freedom and encouragement to start what question she pleased, and to make any remarks on the present subject; that reading, working, and conversation, might fill up the hour with variety and delight. Thus while their hands were making garments for themselves or for the poor, their minds were enriched with treasures of human and divine knowledge.

At proper seasons the young ladies were instructed in the gayer accomplishments of their age: but they were taught to esteem the song and the dance some of their meanest talents, because they are often forgotten in advanced years, and add but little to the virtue, the honour, or the happiness of life.

Phronisia herself was sprightly and active, and she abhorred a slothful and lazy humour; therefore she constantly found out some inviting and agreeable employment for her daughters, that they might hate idleness as a mischievous vice, and be trained up to an active and useful life. Yet she perpetually insinuated the superior delights of the closet, and tempted them by all divine methods to the love of devout retirement. Whensoever she seemed to distinguish them by any peculiar favours, it was generally upon some new indication of early piety, or some young practice of a self-denying virtue.

They were taught to receive visits in form, agreeable to the age; and though they knew the modes of dress sufficiently to secure them from any thing awkward or unfashionable, yet their minds were so well furnished with richer variety, that they had no need to run to those poor and trivial topics, to exclude si-

lence

lence and dullneſs from the drawing-room. They would not give ſuch an affront to the underſtandings of the ladies their viſitants, as to treat them with ſuch meanneſs and impertinence; therefore all this ſort of converſation was reſerved, almoſt entirely, for the minutes appointed to the milliner and the tire-woman.

Here I muſt publiſh it to their honour, to provoke the ſex to imitation, that though they comported with the faſhion in all their ornaments, ſo far as the faſhion was modeſt, and could approve itſelf to reaſon or religion, yet Phroniſſa would not ſuffer their younger judgments ſo far to be impoſed on by cuſtom, as that the mode ſhould be entirely the meaſure of all decency to them. She knew there is ſuch a thing as natural harmony and agreeableneſs; in the beauties of colour and figure, her delicacy of taſte was exquiſite; and where the mode run counter to nature, though ſhe indulged her daughters to follow it in ſome innocent inſtances, becauſe ſhe loved not to be remarkably ſingular in things of indifference, yet ſhe took care always to teach them to diſtinguiſh gay folly and affected extravagance from natural decencies, both in furniture and in dreſs: Their rank in the world was eminent, but they never appeared the firſt, nor the higheſt in any new-fangled forms of attire. By her wiſe example and inſtructions ſhe had ſo formed their minds, as to be able to ſee garments more gaudy, and even more modiſh than their own, without envy or wiſhes. They could bear to find a trimming ſet on a little awry, or the plait of a garment ill-diſpoſed, without making the whole houſe and the day uneaſy, and the ſun and heavens ſmile upon them in vain.

Phroniſſa taught them the happy art of managing a viſit, with ſome uſeful improvement of the hour, and without offence. If a word of ſcandal occurred in company, it was ſoon diverted or ſuppreſſed. The children were charged to ſpeak well of their neighbours as far as truth would admit, and to be ſilent as to any thing further: but when the poor or the deformed were mentioned in diſcourſe, the aged, the lame, or the blind, thoſe objects were handled with the utmoſt tenderneſs: nothing could diſpleaſe Phro-

niſſa

niſſa more than to hear a jeſt thrown upon natural infirmities: ſhe thought there was ſomething ſacred in miſery, and it was not to be touched with a rude hand. All reproach and ſatire of this kind was for ever baniſhed where ſhe came; and if ever raillery was indulged, vice and wilful folly were the conſtant ſubjects of it.

Perſons of diſtinguiſhed characters ſhe always diſtinguiſhed in her reſpect, and trained up her family to pay the ſame civilities. Whenſoever ſhe named her own parents it was with high veneration and love, and thereby ſhe naturally led her children to give due honour to all their ſuperior relatives.

Though it is the faſhion of the age to laugh at the prieſthood in all forms, and to teach every boy to ſcoff at a miniſter, Phroniſſa paid double honours to them who laboured in the word and doctrine, where their perſonal behaviour upheld the dignity of their office; for ſhe was perſuaded Saint Paul was a better director than the gay gentleman of the mode, 1 Tim. v. 17. Beſides ſhe wiſely conſidered, that a contempt of their perſons would neceſſarily bring with it a contempt of all their miniſtrations; and then ſhe might carry her daughters to the church as much as ſhe pleaſed; but preaching and praying, and all ſacred things, would grow deſpicable and uſeleſs when they had firſt learned to make a jeſt of the preacher.

But are theſe young ladies always confined at home? Are they never ſuffered to ſee the world? Yes, and ſometimes without the guard of a mother too; though Phroniſſa is ſo well beloved by her children, that they would very ſeldom chooſe to go without her. Their ſouls are inlaid betimes with the principles of virtue and prudence; theſe are their conſtant guard; nor do they ever with to make a viſit where their mother has reaſon to ſuſpect their ſafety.

They have freedom given them in all the common affairs of life to chooſe for themſelves, but they take pleaſure, for the moſt part, in referring the choice back again to their elders. Phroniſſa has managed the reſtraint of their younger years with ſo much reaſon and love, that they have ſeemed all their lives to know nothing

nothing but liberty; an admonition of their parents meets with cheerful compliance, and is never debated. A wiſh or deſire has the ſame power over them now, as a command had in their infancy and childhood; for the command was ever dreſſed in the ſofteſt language of authority, and this made every act of obedience a delight, till it became an habitual pleaſure.

In ſhort, th y have been educated with ſuch diſcretion, tenderneſs, and piety, as have laid a foundation to make them happy and uſeful in the riſing age: their parents with pleaſure view the growing proſpect, and return daily thanks to Almighty God, whoſe bleſſing has attended their watchful cares, and has thus far anſwered their moſt fervent devotions.

REMNANTS OF TIME,

EMPLOYED IN

PROSE AND VERSE:

OR,

Short Eſſays and Compoſures

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Dr Watt's *opinion about publiſhing theſe papers appears in the following* Advertiſement, *prefixed to them by himſelf.*

THESE papers were written at ſeveral ſeaſons and intervals of leiſure, and on various occaſions ariſing through the greateſt part of my life. Many of them were deſigned to be publiſhed among the *Reliquiæ Juveniles*, but for ſome reaſon or other, not worth preſent notice, were laid by at that time. Whether I ſhall ever publiſh them I know not, though far the greateſt part of them have long ſtood corrected among my manuſcripts; nor do I ſuppoſe many of them inferior to thoſe Eſſays and Remarks of this kind which have before appeared in the world with ſome acceptance. If they are not publiſhed in my life-time, my worthy friends, who have the care of my papers, may leave out what they pleaſe.

I. W.

July 3, 1740.

REMNANTS OF TIME,

EMPLOYED IN

PROSE AND VERSE, &c.

I. *Juſtice* and *Grace.*

NEVER was there any hour ſince the creation of all things, nor ever will be till the laſt conflagration, wherein the holy God, ſo remarkably diſplayed his juſtice and his grace, as that hour, that ſaw our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hanging upon the croſs, forſaken of his Father, and expiring. What a dreadful glory was given to vindictive juſtice, when the great and terrible God made the ſoul of his own Son a painful ſacrifice for ſin! What an amazing inſtance of grace, that he ſhould redeem ſuch worthleſs ſinners as we are from the vengeance, by expoſing his beloved Son to it! When I view the ſeverity or the compaſſion of that hour, my thoughts are loſt in aſtoniſhment: it is not for me, it is not for Paul or Apollos, it is not for the tongue of men or angels to ſay which was greateſt, the compaſſion or the ſeverity. Humble adoration becomes us beſt, and a thankful acceptance of the pardon that was purchaſed at ſo dear a rate.

Next to this I know not a more eminent diſplay of terror and mercy, than the dying hour of a pious but deſponding Chriſtian, under the tumultuous and diſquieting temptations of the devil.

See within thoſe curtains a perſon of faith and ſerious piety, but of a melancholy conſtitution, and expecting death. While his fleſh is tortured with ſharp agonies and terribly convulſed, a ghaſtly horror ſits on

his countenance, and he groans under extreme anguish. Behold the man, a favourite of heaven, a child of light, assaulted with the darts of hell, and his soul surrounded with thick darkness; all his sins stand in dreadful array before him, and threaten him with the execution of all the curses in the Bible. Though he loves God with all his heart, he is in the dark, he knows it not, nor can he believe that God has any love for him; and though he cannot utterly let go his hold of his Saviour and the gospel, yet in his own apprehension he is abandoned both of the Father and the Son. In every new pang that he feels, his own fears persuade him that the gates of hell are now opening upon him: he hangs hovering over the burning pit, and at the last gasp of life, when he seems to be sinking into eternal death, he quits the body with all its sad circumstances, and feels himself safe in the arms of his Saviour, and in the presence of his God.

What amazing transport! What agreeable surprise! not to be uttered by the words of our scanty mortal language, nor conceived but by the person who feels it. The body indeed, which was the habitation of so pious a spirit, is demolished at once: behold the lifeless carcase; it makes haste to putrefaction. The released soul in extacy feels and surveys its own happiness, appears before the throne, is acknowledged there as one of the sons of God, and invested with the glories of the upper world. Sorrows and sins, guilt, fetters and darkness vanish for ever: It exults in liberty and light, and dwells for ever under the smiles of God.

What was it could provoke the wise and gracious God to permit the wicked spirit to vex one of his own children at this rate, and to deal so severely with the man whom he loves? to expose that soul to exquisite anguish in the flesh which he designed the same day to make a partner with blessed spirits? To express in one hour so much terror and so much mercy?

St Paul will give a short and plain answer to this inquiry. Rom. viii. 10. "The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Hence that anguish, those agonies and convulsions in the sinful

ful flesh that must die, and these will be felt in some measure by the partner-spirit; though that spirit being vested with divine righteousness, or justified in the sight of God, shall survive these agonies in a peaceful immortality. Though the sufferings of the Son of God hath redeemed it from an everlasting hell, yet it becomes the offended Majesty of heaven sometimes to give sensible instances what misery the pardoned sinner has deserved; and the moment that he receives him into full blessedness, may, on some accounts, be the fittest to make a display of all his terrors, that the soul may have the full taste of felicity, and pay the higher honours to recovering grace. The demolition of the earthly tabernacle with all the pangs and the groans that attend it, are a shadow of that vengeance which was due even to the best of saints: it is fit we should see the picture of vindictive justice, before we are taken into the arms of eternal mercy.

Besides, there may be another reason that renders the dying hour of this man more dreadful too: perhaps he had walked unwatchfully before God, and had given too much indulgence to some congenial iniquity, some vice that easily beset him; now it becomes the great God to write his own hatred of sin in deep and piercing characters sometimes on his own children, that he may let the world know that he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity any where without resentment. The man had built much hay and stubble upon the divine foundation Christ Jesus, and it was proper that he should be saved so as by fire. 1 Cor. iii. 15.

Will the Papist therefore attempt to support the structure of his purgatory upon such a text as this? An useless structure, and a vain attempt! That place was erected by the superstitious fancy of men, to purge out the sins of a dead man by his own sufferings, and to make him fit for heaven in times hereafter; as though the atoning blood of Christ were not sufficient for complete pardon, or the sanctifying work of the Spirit were imperfect even after death. Whereas the design of God in some such instances of terror, is chiefly to give now-and-then an example to survivors in this life, how highly he is displeased with sin, and

to diſcourage his own people from an indulgence of the works of the fleſh. Now this end could not be attained by all the pains of their pretended purgatory, even though it were a real place of torment, becauſe it is ſo inviſible and unknown.

But whatſoever ſorrows the dying Chriſtian ſuſtains in the wiſe adminiſtrations of Providence, it is by no means to make compenſation to God for ſin; the atoning work of Chriſt is complete ſtill, and the ſanctifying work of the Spirit perfect as ſoon as the ſoul is diſmiſſed from earth; therefore it has an entrance into full bleſſedneſs, ſuch as becomes a God infinite in mercy to beſtow on a penitent ſinner, preſented before the throne in the name and righteouſneſs of his own Son. We are complete in him, Col. ii. 10. By him made perfectly acceptable to God at our death, we are filled with all grace, and introduced into complete glory.

II. *The Death of a young Son.*

In a Letter to a Friend.

MADAM, it has been the delight and practice of the pious in all ages to talk in the words of ſcripture, and in the language of their God: the images of that book are bright and beautiful; and where they happily correſpond with any preſent providence, there is a certain divine pleaſure in the parallel. The Jews have ever uſed it as a faſhionable ſtyle, and it has always been the cuſtom of Chriſtians in the moſt religious times, till iniquity and profaneneſs called it cant and fanaticiſm. The Evangeliſts and the Apoſtles have juſtified the practice; theſe later inſpired authors have often indulged it, even where the Prophet, or firſt writer of the text, had quite another ſubject in view: and though an alluſion to the words of ſcripture will by no means ſtand in the place of a proper expoſition, yet it carries ſomething divine and affecting in it; and by this means it may ſhine in a ſermon, or a familiar epiſtle, and makes a pleaſing ſimilitude. Accept then a few hints of conſolation from a part of ſcripture,

ture, which, by an eaſy turn of thought, may be applied to your caſe.

Rev. xii. 1. "A woman clothed with the ſun, and the moon under her feet: v. 2. Being with child, travailed in birth: v. 5. And ſhe brought forth a man-child, and it was caught up to God and his throne: v. 6. And the woman had a place prepared of God in the wilderneſs, v. 14. To be nouriſhed for a time and times: v. 9. But the great dragon that was caſt out of heaven, the old ſerpent called the Devil and Satan, v. 13. Perſecuted the woman: v. 15. And caſt out of his mouth water as a flood: v. 17. And went to make war with the remnant of her ſeed.

Thus far the words of ſcripture.

Now, Madam, if you have put on Chriſt, and are clothed by faith with the Sun of righteouſneſs; if you are dreſt in the ſhining graces of heaven, and have the pale and changing glories of this world under your feet, then you may be aſſured the child that you have brought forth is not loſt, but is caught up to God and his throne, by virtue of that extenſive covenant which includes ſincere Chriſtians and their offſpring together. Mourn not therefore for your ſon who is with God, but rather for yourſelf, who are yet in the wilderneſs of this world, where the old ſerpent has ſo much power; where he will perſecute you with the flood of his temptations, if poſſible to carry you away with them; but I truſt God has prepared a place for your ſafety, even his church, his goſpel, his own everlaſting arms.

Yet ſhall the ſerpent make war with the remnant of your ſeed; your little daughter that remains in the wilderneſs muſt go through this war, and be expoſed to theſe temptations. O turn your tears from your ſon, into pity and prayer for yourſelf and your daughter, that ye may never be carried away by theſe floods; but when the times are paſt which God has appointed for your abode and nouriſhment in the wilderneſs, you

may rejoice to find yourſelf, with all your offspring, in everlaſting ſafety before the throne of God. Amen.

So prays your affectionate, &c.

I. W.

May 2. 1719.

III. *Heathen Poeſy Chriſtianized.* 1736.

IT is a piece of ancient and ſacred hiſtory which Moſes informs us of, that when the tribes of Iſrael departed from the land of Egypt, they borrowed of their neighbours gold and jewels, by the appointment of God, for the decoration of their ſacrifices and ſolemn worſhip, when they ſhould arrive at the appointed place in the wilderneſs. God himſelf taught his people how the richeſt of metals which had ever been abuſed to the worſhip of idols, might be purified by the fire, and being melted up into a new form, might be conſecrated to the ſervice of the living God, and add to the magnificence and grandeur of his tabernacle and temple. Such are ſome of the poetical writings of the ancient Heathens: they have a great deal of native beauty and luſtre in them, and through ſome happy turn given them by the pen of a Chriſtian poet, may be transformed into divine meditations, and may aſſiſt the devout and pious ſoul in ſeveral parts of the Chriſtian life and worſhip.

Amongſt all the reſt of the Pagan writers, I know none ſo fit for this ſervice as the Odes of Horace, as vile a ſinner as he was. Their manner of compoſure comes nearer the ſpirit and force of the Pſalms of David than any other; and as we take the devotions of the Jewiſh king, and bring them into our Chriſtian churches, by changing the ſcene and the chronology, and ſuperadding ſome of the glories of the goſpel, ſo the repreſentation of ſome of the Heathen Virtues, by a little more labour, may be changed into Chriſtian Graces, or at leaſt into the image of them, ſo far as human power can reach. One day muſing on this project, I made an experiment on the two laſt ſtanzas of Ode 29. Book III.

Non

Non meum eſt, ſi mugiat Africis
Malus procellis, ad miſeras preces
Decurrere, et votis paciſci,
Ne Cypriæ Tyriæque merces
Addant avaro divitias mari.
Tunc me biremis præſidio ſcaphæ,
Tutum per Ægæos tumultus
Aura feret, geminuſque Pollux.

The Britiſh Fiſherman.

I.

Let Spain's proud traders, when the maſt
Bends groaning to the ſtormy blaſt,
Run to their beads with wretched plaints,
And vow and bargain with their ſaints,
Leſt Turkiſh ſilks, or Tyrian wares,
Sink in their drowning ſhip,
Or the rich duſt Peru prepares,
Defraud their long projecting cares,
And add new treaſures to the greedy deep.

II.

My little ſkiff, that ſkims the ſhores,
With half a ſail, and two ſhort oars,
Provides me food in gentler waves:
But if they gape in wat'ry graves,
I truſt th' eternal power, whoſe hand
Hath ſwell'd the ſtorm ſo high,
To waft my boat, and me to land,
Or give ſome angel ſwift command
To bear the drowning ſailor to the ſky.

IV. *Redemption.*

I.

THE mighty frame of glorious grace,
That brighteſt monument of praiſe
That e'er the God of love deſign'd,
Employs and fills my labouring mind.

II.

II.

Begin, my muſe, the heav'nly ſong,
A burden for an angel's tongue:
When Gabriel ſounds theſe awful things,
He tunes and ſummons all his ſtrings.

III.

Proclaim inimitable love:
Jeſus, the Lord of worlds above,
Puts off the beams of bright array,
And vails the God in mortal clay.

IV.

What black reproach defil'd his name,
When with our ſin he took our ſhame!
The power whom kneeling angels bleſt
Is made the impious rabble's jeſt.

V.

He that diſtributes crowns and thorns,
Hangs on a tree and bleeds and groans:
The Prince of life reſigns his breath,
The King of glory bows to death.

VI.

But ſee the wonders of his power,
He triumphs in his dying hour,
And whilſt by Satan's rage he fell,
He daſh'd the riſing hopes of hell.

VII.

Thus were the hoſts of death ſubdu'd,
And ſin was drown'd in Jeſus' blood;
Then he aroſe, and reigns above,
And conquers ſinners by his love.

If I could purſue all the wondrous achievements of a dying and a riſing Saviour in verſe, as faſt and as far as my thoughts ſometimes attempt to trace them, I ſhould lengthen this Ode to many ſtanzas, and yet at laſt I ſhould loſe both my thoughts and my verſe amongſt

mongſt the unknown wonders of his glory, and the ages of eternity.

Who ſhall fulfil this boundleſs ſong?
What vain pretender dares?
The theme ſurmounts an angel's tongue,
And Gabriel's harp deſpairs *.

V. *Complaint and Hope under great Pain.* 1736.

I.

LORD, I am pain'd; but I reſign
To thy ſuperior will:
'Tis grace, 'tis wiſdom all divine,
Appoints the pains I feel.

II.

Dark are thy ways of providence,
While thoſe that love thee groan:
Thy reaſons lie conceal'd from ſenſe,
Myſterious and unknown.

III.

Yet nature may have leave to ſpeak,
And plead before her God,
Leſt the o'er-burden'd heart ſhould break
Beneath thy heavy rod.

IV.

Will nothing but ſuch daily pain
Secure my ſoul from hell?
Canſt thou not make my health attain
Thy kind deſigns as well?

* Note, In this Ode, there are three or four lines taken from Mr Stennet's Sacramental Hymns, for when I found they expreſt my thought and deſign in proper and beautiful language, I chuſe rather to borrow and acknowledge the debt, than to labour hard for worſe lines, that I might have the poor pleaſure of calling them my own.

V.

How ſhall my tongue proclaim thy grace
While thus at home confin'd?
What can I write, while painful fleſh
Hangs heavy on the mind?

VI.

Theſe groans and ſighs and flowing tears
Give my poor ſpirit eaſe,
While ev'ry groan my Father hears,
And ev'ry tear he ſees.

VII.

Is not ſome ſmiling hour at hand
With peace upon its wings?
Give it, O God, thy ſwift command,
With all the joys it brings.

VI. On an Elegy, written by the Right Honourable the Counteſs of Hertford, on the Death of Mrs Rowe, 1737.

STRUCK with the ſight of Philomela's urn
Euſebia weeps, and calls her muſe to mourn:
While from her lips the tuneful ſorrows fell,
The groves confeſs a riſing Philomel.

VII. Dr Young's admirable Deſcription of the Peacock enlarged.

VIEW next the peacock: what bright glories run
From plume to plume, and vary in the ſun?
Proudly he boaſts, then to the heav'nly ray
Gives all his colours, and adorns the day.
Was it thy pencil, Job, divinely bold,
Dreſt his rich form in azure, green, and gold?
Thy hand his creſt with ſtarry radiance crown'd,
Or ſpread his ſweepy train? his train diſdains the ground,
And kindles living lamps through all the ſpacious round.

Mark

Mark with what conſcious ſtate the bird diſplays
His native gems, and 'midſt the waving blaze
On the ſlow ſtep of majeſty he moves,
Aſſerts his honours, and demands his loves.

VIII. *Vanity inſcribed on all Things.*

TIME, like a long flowing ſtream, makes haſte into eternity, and is for ever loſt and ſwallowed up there; and while it is haſtening to its period, it ſweeps away all things with it which are not immortal. There is a limit appointed by providence to the duration of all the pleaſant and deſirable ſcenes of life, to all the works of the hands of men, with all the glories and excellences of animal nature, and all that is made of fleſh and blood. Let us not doat upon any thing here below, for heaven hath inſcribed vanity upon it. The moment is haſtening when the decree of heaven ſhall be utterred, and providence ſhall pronounce upon every glory of the earth, "Its time ſhall be no longer."

What is that ſtately building, that princely palace, which now entertains and amuſes our ſight with ranks of marble columns, and wide-ſpreading arches, that gay edifice which enriches our imagination with a thouſand royal ornaments, and a profuſion of coſtly and glittering furniture? Time, and all its circling hours, with a ſwift wing are bruſhing it away; decay ſteals upon it inſenſibly, and a few years hence it ſhall lie in mouldering ruin and deſolation. Unhappy poſſeſſor, if he has no better inheritance!

What are thoſe fine and elegant gardens, thoſe delightful walks, thoſe gentle aſcents and ſoft declining hopes, which raiſe and ſink the eye by turns to a thouſand vegetable pleaſures? How lovely are thoſe ſweet borders, and thoſe growing varieties of bloom and fruit, which recall loſt paradiſe to mind? Thoſe living parterres which regale the ſenſe with vital fragrancy, and make glad the ſight by their refreſhing verdure and intermingled flowery beauties? The ſcythe of time is paſſing over them all: they wither, they die away, they drop and vaniſh into duſt; their duration is ſhort; a few months deface all their yearly glories, and within

in a few years, perhaps all theſe riſing terras-walks, theſe gentle verging declivities, ſhall loſe all order and elegance, and become a rugged heap of ruins: thoſe well-diſtinguiſhed borders and parterres ſhall be levelled in confuſion, and thrown into common earth again, for the ox and the aſs to graze upon them. Unhappy man, who poſſeſſes this agreeable ſpot of ground, if he he has no paradiſe more durable than this!

And no wonder that theſe labours of the hands of men ſhould periſh, when even the works of God are periſhable.

What are theſe viſible heavens, theſe lower ſkies, and this globe of the earth? They are indeed the glorious workmanſhip of the Almighty. But they are waxing old, and waiting their period too, when the angel ſhall pronounce upon them that Time ſhall be no more. The heavens ſhall be folded up as a veſture, the elements of the lower world ſhall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and all the works thereof, ſhall be burnt up with fire. May the unruinable world be but my portion, and the heaven of heavens my inheritance, which is built for an eternal manſion for the ſons of God: theſe buildings ſhall out-live time and nature, and exiſt through unknown ages of felicity!

What have we mortals to be proud of in our preſent ſtate, when every human glory is ſo fugitive and fading? Let the brighteſt and the beſt of us ſay to ourſelves, that we are but duſt and vanity.

Is my body formed upon a graceful model? Are my limbs well turned, and my complexion better coloured than my neighbours? Beauty, even in perfection, is of the ſhorteſt date; a few years will inform me that its bloom variſhes, its flower withers, its luſtre grows dim, its duration ſhall be no longer; and if life be prolonged, yet the pride and glory of it is for ever loſt in age and wrinkles: or perhaps our vanity meets a ſpeedier fate. Death and the grave, with a ſovereign and irreſiſtible command, ſummon the brighteſt as well as the coarſeſt pieces of human nature, to lie down early in their cold embraces; and at laſt they muſt all mix together, among worms and corruption. Æſop the deformed, and Helena the fair, are loſt and undiſtin-

undiſtinguiſhed in common earth. Nature in its gayeſt bloom is but a painted vanity.

Are my nerves well ſtrung and vigorous? Is my activity and ſtrength far ſuperior to my neighbours in the days of youth? But youth hath its appointed limit: age ſteals upon it, unſtrings the nerves, and makes the force of nature languiſh into infirmity and feebleneſs. Sampſon and Goliath would have loſt their boaſted advantages of ſtature and their brawny limbs, in the courſe of half a century, though the one had eſcaped the ſling of David, and the other the vengeance of his own hands in the ruin of Dagon's temple. Man, in his beſt eſtate, is a flying ſhadow and vanity.

Even thoſe nobler powers of human life, which ſeem to have ſomething angelical in them, I mean the powers of wit and fancy, gay imagination, and capacious memory, they are all ſubject to the ſame laws of decay and death. What though they can raiſe and animate beautiful ſcenes in a moment, and in imitation of creating power, can ſpread bright appearances and new worlds before the ſenſes and the ſouls of their friends? What though they can entertain the better part of mankind, the refined and polite world with high delight and rapture? Theſe ſcenes of rapturous delight grow flat and old by a frequent review, and the very powers that raiſed them grow feeble apace. What though they can give immortal applauſe and fame to their poſſeſſors? It is but the immortality of an empty name, a mere ſucceſſion of the breath of men; and it is a ſhort ſort of immortality too, which muſt die and periſh when this world periſhes. A poor ſhadow of duration indeed, while the real period of theſe powers is haſtening every day; they languiſh and die as faſt as animal nature, which has a large ſhare in them, makes haſte to its decay; and the time of their exerciſe ſhall ſhortly be no more.

In vain the aged poet or the painter would call up the muſe and genius of their youth, and ſummon all the arts of their imagination, to ſpread and dreſs out ſome viſionary ſcene: in vain the elegant orator would recall the bold and maſterly figures, and all thoſe flowery images which gave ardour, grace, and dignity to

his younger compoſures, and charmed every ear: they are gone, they are fled beyond the reach of their owner's call: their time is paſt, they are vaniſhed and loſt beyond all hope of recovery.

The God of nature has pronounced an unpaſſable period upon all the powers and pleaſures and glories of this mortal ſtate. Let us then be afraid to make any of them our boaſt or our happineſs, but point our affections to thoſe diviner objects, whoſe nature is everlaſting; let us ſeek thoſe religious attainments, and thoſe new-created powers of a ſanctified mind, concerning which it ſhall never be pronounced, that their time ſhall be no longer.

O may every one of us be humbly content, at the call of heaven, to part with all that is pleaſing or magnificent here on earth; let us reſign even theſe agreeable talents when the God of nature demands; and when the hour arrives, that ſhall cloſe our eyes to all viſible things, and lay our fleſhy ſtructure in the duſt; let us yield up our whole ſelves to the hands of our Creator, who ſhall reſerve our ſpirits with himſelf; and while we cheerfully give up all that was mortal to the grave, we may lie down full of the joyful hope of a riſing immortality. New and unknown powers and glories, brighter flames of imagination, richer ſcenes of wit and fancy, and diviner talents are preparing for us, when we ſhall awake from the duſt, and the mind itſelf ſhall have all its faculties in a ſublime ſtate of improvement. Theſe ſhall make us equal, if not ſuperior to angels, for we are nearer a-kin to the Son of God than they are, and therefore we ſhall be made more like him.

IX. *The Rake reformed in the Houſe of Mourning.*

FLORINO was young and idle; he gave himſelf up to all the diverſions of the town, and roved wild among the pleaſures of ſenſe; nor did he confine himſelf within the limits of virtue, or withhold his heart from any forbidden joy. Often hath he been heard to redicule marriage, and affirm that no man can mourn heartily for a dead wife; for then he hath leave by the law

law to chooſe a new companion, to riot in all the gayer ſcenes of a new courtſhip, and perhaps to advance his fortune too.

When he heard of the death of Serena, "Well," ſaid he, "I will go viſit my friend Lucius, and rally "him a little on this occaſion." He went the next day in all the wantonneſs of his heart to fulfil his deſign, inhuman and barbarous as it was, and to ſport with ſolemn ſorrow. But when Lucius appeared, the man of gaiety was ſtrangely ſurpriſed; he ſaw ſuch a ſincere and inimitable diſtreſs ſitting on his countenance, and diſcovering itſelf in every air and action, that he dropt his cruel purpoſe, his ſoul began to melt, and he aſſumed the comforter.

Florino's methods of conſolation were all drawn from two topics: Some from fate and neceſſity, adviſing an heroic indolence about unavoidable events, which are paſt and cannot be reverſed; and ſome were derived from the various amuſements of life which call the ſoul abroad, and divide and ſcatter the thoughts, and ſuffer not the mind to attend to its inward anguiſh. "Come, "Lucius," ſaid he, "come, ſmooth your brows a little, and brighten up for an hour or two. Come a-"long with me to a concert this evening, where you "ſhall hear ſome of the beſt pieces of muſic that were "ever compoſed, and performed by ſome of the beſt "hands that ever touched an inſtrument. To-morrow "I will wait on you to the play, or if you pleaſe, to "the new opera, where the ſcenes are ſo ſurpriſing "and ſo gay, they would almoſt tempt an old hermit "from his beloved cell, and call back his years to "three-and-twenty. Come, my friend, what have the "living to do with the dead? Do but forget your "grievances a little and they will die too: Come, "ſhake off the ſpleen, divert your heart with the en-"tertainments of wit and melody, and call away your "fancy from theſe gloomy and uſeleſs contempla-"tions." Thus he ran on in his own way of talking, and opened to his mourning friend the beſt ſprings of comfort that he was acquainted with.

Lucius endured this prattle as long as he was able to endure it, but it had no manner of influence to

ſtanch the bleeding wound, or to abate his ſmarting ſorrows. His pain waxed more intenſe by ſuch ſort of applications, and the grief ſoon grew too unruly to contain itſelf.

Lucius then aſked leave to retire a little: Florino followed him ſoftly at a diſtance to the door of his cloſet, where indeed he obſerved not any of the rules of civility or juſt decency, but placed himſelf near enough to liſten how the paſſion took its vent: and there he heard the diſtreſſed Lucius mourning over Serena's death in ſuch language as this:

What did Florino talk about? Neceſſity and Fate? Alas! this is my miſery, that ſo painful an event cannot be reverſed, that the divine will has made it fate, there is a neceſſity of my enduring it.

Plays and muſic and operas! What poor trifles are theſe to give eaſe to a wounded heart? To a heart that has loſt its choiceſt half! A heart that lies bleeding in deep anguiſh under ſuch a keen parting ſtroke, and the long, long abſence of my Serena! She is gone.—The deſire of my eyes and the delight of my ſoul is gone.—The firſt of earthly comforts, and the beſt of mortal bleſſings.—She is gone, and ſhe has taken with her all that was pleaſant, all that could brighten the gloomy hours of life, that could ſoften the cares, and relieve the burdens of it.—She is gone, and the beſt portion and joy of my life is departed. Will ſhe never return, never come back and bleſs my eyes again? No; never, never.—She will no more come back to viſit this wretched world, and to dry theſe weeping eyes. That beſt portion of my life, that deareſt bleſſing is gone, and will return no more. Sorrows in long ſucceſſion await me while I live; all my future days are marked out for grief and darkneſs. Let the man who feels no inward pain at the loſs of ſuch a partner dreſs his dwelling in black ſhades and diſmal formalities: Let him draw the curtains of darkneſs around him, and teach his chambers a faſhionable mourning: but real anguiſh of heart needs none of theſe modiſh and diſſembled ſorrows. My ſoul is hung round with dark images in all her apartments, and every ſcene is ſincere lamentation and death.

I thought once I had ſome pretences to the courage of a man: but this is a ſeaſon of untried diſtreſs: I now ſhudder at a thought, I ſtart at ſhadows, my ſpirits are ſunk, and horror has taken hold of me. I feel paſſions in me that were unknown before; love has its own proper grief and its peculiar anguiſh. Mourning love has thoſe agonies and thoſe ſinkings of ſpirit, which are known only to bereaved and virtuous lovers.

I ſtalk about like a ghoſt, in muſing ſilence, till the gathering ſorrow grows too big for the heart, and burſts out into weak and unmanly wailings. Strange and overwhelming ſtroke indeed! It has melted all the man within me down to fondneſs: my nature is gone back to childhood again: I would maintain the dignity of my age and my ſex, but theſe eyes rebel and betray me; the eye-lids are full, they overflow; the drops of love and grief trickle down my cheeks, and plough the furrows of age there before their time.

How often in a day are theſe ſluices opened afreſh? The ſight of every friend that knew her calls up my weakneſs, and betrays my frailty. I am quite aſhamed of myſelf. What ſhall I do? Is there nothing of manhood left about my heart? I will reſiſt the paſſion, I will ſtruggle with nature, I will grow indolent and forbid my tears. Alas! poor feeble wretch that I am! In vain I ſtruggle; in vain I reſiſt: The aſſumed indolence vaniſhes; the real paſſion works within, it ſwells and bears down all before it: the torrent riſes and prevails hourly, and nature will have its way. Even the Son of God, when he became man, was found weeping at the tomb of a darling friend. Lazarus died, and Jeſus wept.

O my ſoul, what ſhall I do to relieve this heart-ache? How ſhall I cure this painful ſenſibility? Is there no opiate will reach it? Whither ſhall I go to leave my ſorrows behind me? I wander from one room to another, and wherever I go I ſtill ſeem to ſeek her, but I miſs her ſtill. My imagination flatters me with her lovely image, and tempts me to doubt, Is ſhe dead indeed? My fond imagination would fain forget her death-bed, and impoſe upon my hope that I ſhall find

her ſomewhere. I viſit her apartment, I ſteal into her cloſet: in days paſt, when I have miſſed her in the parlour, how often have I found the dear creature in that beloved corner of the houſe, that ſweet place of divine retirement and converſe with heaven? But even that cloſet is empty now. I go thither, and I retire in diſappointment and confuſion.

Methinks I ſhould meet her in ſome of her walks, in ſome of her family cares, or her innocent amuſements: I ſhould ſee her face, methinks, I ſhould hear her voice, and exchange a tender word or two.——— Ah, fooliſh rovings of a diſtreſſed and diſquieted fancy! Every room is empty and ſilent; cloſet, parlours, chambers, all empty, all ſilent; and that very ſilence and emptineſs proclaim my ſorrows: even emptineſs and deep ſilence join to confeſs the painful loſs.

Shall I try then to put her quite out of my thoughts, ſince ſhe will come no more within the reach of my ſenſes? Shall I looſen the fair picture, and drop it from my heart, ſince the fairer original is for ever gone? Go, then, fair picture, go from my boſom, and appear to my ſoul no more. Hard word! but it muſt be done: go, depart thou deareſt form; thou moſt lovely of images, go from my heart; thy preſence is now too painful in that tender part of me. O unhappy world! Thy preſence painful? A diſmal change indeed! When thou wert wont to ariſe and ſhew thyſelf there, graces and joys were wont to ariſe and ſhew themſelves: graces and joys went always with her; nor did her image ever appear without them, till that dark and bitter day that ſpread the vail of death over her: but her image, dreſt in that gloomy vail, hath loſt all the attendant joys and graces. Let her picture vaniſh from my ſoul then, ſince it has loſt thoſe endearing attendants: let it vaniſh away into forgetfulneſs, for death has robbed it of every grace and every joy.

Yet ſtay a little there, tempting image, let me once more ſurvey thee: ſtay a little moment, and let me take one laſt glance, one ſolemn farewell. Is there not ſomething in the reſemblance of her too lovely ſtill to have it quite baniſhed from my heart? Can I ſet my ſoul at work to try to forget her? Can I deal

ſo

ſo unkindly with one, who would never have forgotten me? Can my ſoul live without her image on it? Is it not ſtampt there too deep ever to be effaced?

Methinks I feel all my heart-ſtrings wrapt around her, and grow ſo faſt to that dear picture in my fancy, they ſeem to be rooted there. To be divided from it is to die. Why ſhould I then purſue ſo vain and fruitleſs an attempt?- What! forget myſelf, forget my life? No; it cannot be; nor can I bear to think of ſuch a rude and cruel treatment of an image ſo much deſerving and ſo much beloved. Neither paſſion nor reaſon permits me to forget her, nor is it within my power. She is preſent almoſt to all my thoughts: ſhe is with me in all my motions; grief has arrows with her name upon them, that ſtick as faſt and as deep as thoſe of love; they cleave to my vitals whereſoever I go, but with a quicker ſenſation, and a keener pain. Alas! it is love and grief together that have ſhot all their arrows into my heart, and filled every vein with acute anguiſh and long diſtreſs.

Whither then ſhall I fly to find ſolace and eaſe? I cannot depart from myſelf: I cannot abandon theſe tender and ſmarting ſenſations. Shall I quit the houſe and all the apartments of it which renew her dear memory? Shall I rove in theſe open fields which lie near my dwelling, and ſpread wide their pleaſing verdure? Shall I give my ſoul a looſe to all nature that ſmiles around me, or ſhall I confine my daily walk to this ſhady and delightful garden? Oh, no: neither of theſe will relieve my anguiſh. Serena has too often bleſſed me with her company, both in this garden and in theſe fields. Her very name ſeems written on every tree: I ſhall think of her, and fancy I ſee her in every ſtep I take. Here ſhe preſt the graſs with her feet, here ſhe gathered violets and roſes and refreſhing herbs, and gave the lovely collection of ſweetneſs into my hand. But alas! the ſweeteſt violet and the faireſt roſe is fallen, is withered, and is no more. Farewell then, ye fields and gardens, with all your varieties of green and flowery joys! Ye are all a deſart, a barren wilderneſs, ſince Serena has for ever left you, and will be ſeen there no more.

But

But can friends do nothing to comfort a mourner? Come, my wife friends, furround me, and divert my cares with your agreeable converfation. Can books afford no relief? Come, my books, ye volumes of knowledge, ye labours of the learned dead; come, fill up my hours with fome foothing amufement. I call my better friends about me, I fly to the heroes and the philofophers of ancient ages, to employ my foul among them. But alas! neither learning nor books amufe me, nor green and fmiling profpects of nature delight me, nor converfation with my wifeft and beft friends can entertain me in thefe dark and melancholy hours. Solitude, folitude, in fome unfeen corner, fome lonely grotto, overgrown with fhades, this is my dearest choice. Let me dwell in my beloved folitude, where none fhall come near me; midnight and folitude are the moft pleafing things to a man who is weary of day light, and of all the fcenes of this viftble and bufy world. I would eat and drink and dwell alone, though this lonefome humour foothes and gratifies the painful paffion, and gives me up to the tyranny of my fharpeft forrows. Strange mixture that I am made of? I mourn and grieve even to death, and yet I feem fond of nothing but grief and mourning.

Wo is me! Is there nothing on earth can divert, nothing relieve me? Then let my thoughts afcend to paradife and heaven, there I fhall find her better part, and grief muft not enter there. From this hour take a new turn, O my foul, and never think of Serena but as fhining and rejoicing among the fpirits of the bleft, and in the prefence of her God. Rife often in holy meditation to the celeftial world, and betake thyfelf to more intenfe piety. Devotion has wings that will bear thee high above the tumults and paffions of lower life: devotion will direct and fpeed thy flight to a country of brighter fcenes.

Shake off this earthlinefs of mind, this duft of mortality that hangs about thee; rife upward often in an hour, and dwell much in thofe regions whither thy devout partner is gone: thy better half is fafely arrived there, and that world knows nothing but joy and love.

She

She is gone; the prophets and the apoſtles, and the beſt of departed ſouls, have marked out her way to heaven: bear witneſs ye apoſtles and holy prophets, ye beſt of departed ſouls bear witneſs, that I am ſeeking to follow her in the appointed moment. Let the wheels of nature and time roll on apace in their deſtined way. Let ſuns and moons ariſe and ſet apace, and light a loneſome traveller onward to his home. Bleſſed Jeſus, be thou my living Leader? Virtue, and the track of Serena's feet be my daily and delightful path. The track leads upward to the regions of love and joy. How can I dare to wander from the path of virtue, leſt I loſe that beloved track? Remember, O my ſoul, her footſteps are found in no other road.

If my love to virtue ſhould ever fail me, the ſteps of my Serena would mark out my way, and help to ſecure me from wandering. O may the kind influences of heaven deſcend from above, and eſtabliſh and guard my pious reſolutions! May the divine powers of religion be my continual ſtrength, and the hope of eternal things my never-failing ſupport, till I am diſmiſſed from this priſon of the fleſh, and called to aſcend to the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect; till I bid adieu to all that is not immortal, and go dwell with my God and my adored Saviour; there ſhall I find my loſt Serena again, and ſhare with her the unutterable joys of paradiſe.

Here Lucius threw himſelf on the couch, and lay ſilent in profound meditation.

When Florino had heard all this mournful rhapſody, he retired and ſtole way in ſecret, for he was now utterly aſhamed of his firſt barbarous deſign: he felt a ſort of ſtrange ſympathy of ſorrow ſuch as he never knew before, and with it ſome ſparks of virtue began to kindle in his boſom. As he mused, the fire burnt within, and at laſt it made its way to his lips, and vented itſelf. "Well," ſaid he, "I have learnt two "excellent leſſons to-day, and I hope I ſhall never for-"get them. There muſt be ſome vaſt and unknown "pleaſure in a virtuous love, beyond all the madneſs "of wild and tranſient amours; otherwiſe the loſs of "the object could never have wrought ſuch deep and

"unfeigned

" unfeigned wo in a ſoul ſo firm and manly as that of " Lucius. I begin now to believe what Milton ſung, " though I always read the lines before as mere poeſy " and fable.

Hail wedded love, myſterious law, true ſource
Of human offſpring, ſole propriety
In paradiſe, of all things common elſe;
By thee adulterous luſt was driven from men,
Among the beſtial herds to range; by thee,
Founded in reaſon, loyal, juſt, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, ſon, and brother, firſt were known:
Perpetual fountain of domeſtic ſweets.
Here love his golden ſhafts employs, here lights
His conſtant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought ſmile
Of harlots, loveleſs, joyleſs, unendear'd
Caſual amours, mixt dance, or wanton maſk,
Or midnight ball, &c.

" Bleſſed poet, that could ſo happily unite love and " virtue, and draw ſo beautiful a ſcene of real felicity, " which till this day I always thought was merely ro- " mantic and viſionary! Lucius has taught me to un- " derſtand theſe lines, for he has felt them; and me- " thinks while I repeat them now, I feel a ſtrange new " ſenſation. I am convinced, the blind poet ſaw deep- " er into nature and truth than I could have imagined. " There is, there is ſuch a thing as a union of virtuous " ſouls, where happineſs is only found. I find ſome " glimmerings of ſacred light riſing upon me, ſome " unknown pantings within after ſuch a partner and " ſuch a life.

" Nor is the other leſſon which I have learnt at all " inferior to this, but in truth it is of higher and more " durable importance. I confeſs ſince I was nineteen " years old, I never thought virtue and religion had " been good for any thing, but to tie up children from " miſchief, and frighten fools: but now I find, by the " conduct of my friend Lucius, that as the ſweeteſt " and ſincereſt joys of life are derived from virtue, ſo

the

" the moſt diſtreſſing ſorrows may find a juſt relief in
" religion and ſincere piety. Hear me, thou almighty
" Maker of my frame, pity and aſſiſt a returning wan-
" derer; and O may thy hand ſtamp theſe leſſons upon
" my ſoul in everlaſting characters!"

X. *Thou haſt received Gifts for Men.* Pſalm lxviii. 18.

JESUS the Mediator emptied himſelf for our ſakes, when he deſcended to earth in order to die for us, and by his death to ſubdue our enemies. Now the Father has filled him again at his aſcent into heaven with every glory and every bleſſing, with all authority and power to beſtow bleſſings, graces and glories on the ſons of men. " It pleaſed the Father, that in him all fulneſs ſhould dwell. All power in heaven and earth was given into his hands." Col. i. 19. Matth. xxviii. 18. And when he received the power he diſtributed the bleſſings. See Acts ii. 33. Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear. He hath ſhed abroad miracles and graces in abundance amongſt the inhabitants of the lower world.

The triumphs of majeſty muſt have ſome mercy in them, and enſigns of victory muſt be interwoven with ſignal diſplays of bounty and grace. When he led captivity captive, he received gifts for men. Our conquering Redeemer was not ſo elevated with the pomp of his triumphs over the angels his captive enemies, as to forget the captives that he releaſed among the children of Adam. He received many donatives from his Father on high, to ſhower down among them upon his coronation day, that illuſtrious day, when " He that in righteouſneſs had made war and conquered, received on his own head many crowns." Rev. xix. 11, 12.

He that could take ſo much pleaſure on earth in his labours of love, takes more delight in heaven in the diſtributions of grace. This is the ſweeteſt part of his triumph, and the moſt viſible among men, even the gifts of the Spirit that he ſent down after his aſcenſion.

It

It was neceſſary that his grace ſhould have ſome ſhare of the glory of that day.

What was ſaid of the great day of deliverance, when the Jews obtained victory over their deſigned murderers, may be applied with honour to the day when our Lord aſcended to heaven, and celebrated his triumph over the ſpirits of darkneſs. "This was a good day for Iſrael, for all the ſaints; a day when Jeſus reſted from his enemies, and a month which was turned unto him from ſorrow to joy, and from mourning into a day of gladneſs. This was a day of receiving portions for his brethren, and of ſending gifts to the poor." Eſther ix. 22.

Jeſus our King is the Prince of power, and the Prince of peace, he ſolemnized his victory with acts of mercy, and begun his reign with gifts of grace. He led Satan the arch-traitor bound at his chariot-wheels, and ſcattered donatives of pardon and life among the ſons of Adam that had been ſeduced into the great rebellion.

It is another pleaſant meditation on this text, "That God the Father had not given away all his gifts to men, even when he gave them his only begotten Son," for ſince that time he hath given his Son more gifts to be diſtributed among them. Learn hence the unwearied love of God, the inexhauſted ſtores of divine mercy. John iv. 10. Chriſt is called the gift of God. And 2 Cor. ix. 15. The unſpeakable gift. He gave his own Son out of his boſom, and gave Him up to death for us. His Son that was neareſt his heart, his Son the delight of his ſoul and darling of his eternal enjoyment; and yet he is not weary of giving. O the immeaſurable treaſures of grace! O the unlimitable bounties of our God! Stand amazed, O heavens, and let the earth lie low in thankfulneſs and wonder, and every holy ſoul adore this ſurpriſing love!

Our meditations may take another ſtep, and ſee here the divine condeſcenſion to human weakneſs: how a giving God ſtoops to the capacity of receiving creatures, and beſtows the richeſt bleſſings on us in a ſweet and alluring manner of conveyance. When he gave his Son to us, he firſt arrayed him in fleſh and blood,

that the glories of the Deity might not affright us, nor his terror make us afraid. When he proceeds to confer on us further gifts, he puts them into the hands of his Son dwelling in our nature, that we might have eaſy acceſs to him without fear, and receive gifts from him as a delightful medium, by whom a God of infinite purity hath a mind to confer favours on ſinful man.

He has put all grace into thoſe hands whence we ourſelves would chooſe to fetch it. If a God of ſhining holineſs and burning juſtice ſhould appear like himſelf and call to us, guilty wretches, and hold forth his hand, here are gifts, here are pardons, here are ſalvations for you, we ſhould be ready to ſay with Job, xiii. 21. "Withdraw thine hand far from me, and let not thy dread make me afraid." But here we ſinners come to a man, to one that has worn our fleſh and blood, that is our brother, and of our own compoſition; we come with courage to him that looks like one of us to receive the gifts of a holy God, and the terrors of his holineſs ſink us not, nor doth the fire of his juſtice devour us. O my ſoul bow down and worſhip that God who ſtoops ſo low to thee, and has found ſuch a mild and gentle method of conferring his heavenly favours on thee.

XI. *The Gift of the Spirit.*

WHAT is dearer to God the Father than his only Son? And what diviner bleſſing has he to beſtow upon men than his holy Spirit? Yet has he given his Son for us, and by the hands of his Son he confers his bleſſed Spirit on us. "Jeſus having received of the Father the promiſe of the Spirit, ſhed it forth on men." Acts ii. 33.

How the wondrous doctrine of the bleſſed Trinity ſhines through the whole of our religion, and ſheds a glory upon every part of it! Here is God the Father, a King of infinite riches and glory, has conſtituted his beloved Son the High-treaſurer of heaven, and the holy Spirit is the divine and ineſtimable treaſure. What amazing doctrines of ſacred love are written in

our Bibles! What myſteries of mercy, what miracles of glory are theſe! Our boldeſt deſires and moſt raiſed hopes, durſt never aim at ſuch bleſſings; there is nothing in all nature that can lead us to a thought of ſuch grace.

The Spirit was given by the Father to the Son for men; for rebellious and ſinful men, to make favourites and ſaints of them: this was the noble gift the Son "received when he aſcended on high," Pſal. lxviii. 18. And he diſtributed it to grace his triumph.

Was it not a divine honour which Jeſus our Lord diſplayed on that day, when the tongues of fire ſat on his twelve apoſtles; when he ſent his ambaſſadors to every nation to addreſs them in their own language, to notify his acceſſion to the throne of heaven, and to demand ſubjection to his government? When he conferred power upon his envoys to reverſe the laws of nature and imitate creation? To give eyes to the blind, and to raiſe the dead? All this was done by the Spirit which he ſent down upon them in the days of Pentecoſt.

But is this Spirit given to none but his apoſtles and the prime miniſters in his kingdom? Was that rich treaſure exhauſted in the firſt ages of the goſpel, and none left for us? God forbid! Every one of his ſubjects have the ſame favour beſtowed upon them, though not in the ſame degree: every humble and holy ſoul in our day, every true Chriſtian is poſſeſſed of the Spirit, for "he that has not the Spirit of Chriſt is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. And wherever this Spirit is, it works miracles too; it changes the ſinner to a ſaint, it opens his blind eyes; it new-creates his nature; it raiſes the dead to a divine life, and teaches Egypt and Aſſyria and the Britiſh iſles to ſpeak the language of Canaan. It is this gift of the Spirit which the Son ſends down to us continually from the Father, that is the original and ſpring of all theſe ſtrange bleſſings.

The Father has a heart of large bounty to the poor ruined race of Adam: the Son has a hand fit to be Almoner to the King of glory; and the Spirit is the rich alms. This bleſſed donative has enriched ten thouſand

thouſand ſouls already, and there remains enough to enrich ten thouſand worlds.

The Father, what a glorious giver! the Son, what a glorious medium of communication! and the Spirit, what a glorious gift! We bluſh and adore while we partake of ſuch immenſe favours, and gratitude is even overwhelmed with wonder.

O let our ſpirits rejoice in this bleſſed article of our religion! and may all the temptations that we meet with from men of reaſon, never, never baffle ſo ſweet a faith!

XII. *The Day of Grace.*

IF you aſk the opinion of ſome divines concerning the day of grace, they will tell you, it ſignifies that particular ſeaſon of a man's life, when the Spirit of God by convictions and good motions ſtirs him up to ſeek after ſalvation, and gives him ſufficient grace to convert him; and all this while it was poſſible for him to be ſaved, and it was within the reach of his own power to make this grace effectual:—But this is determined to a certain, though unknown day, which if a man paſſes without being converted, then his ſalvation becomes impoſſible. Now, though I would not chooſe to borrow all my ſentiments in the chief doctrines of the goſpel from the ſermons of a biſhop publiſhed on the terms of ſalvation, yet againſt this ſcheme I may venture to uſe an argument taken from that book.

Let us ſuppoſe, that it was declared in the goſpel, that there was a certain number of ſins, or a certain period of time, beyond which God would not pardon; and not any particular number, or time, was ſpecified to the world: yet ſtill moſt men (it is too juſtly to be feared) would firſt be led by hope to commit many ſins, with a flattering perſuaſion that they ſhould not come to that number, or arrive at that period: and then, when the habit was become ſtrong, they would be fixed by deſpair in this opinion, that being probably got paſt that number of ſins, and that period of grace, they had even as good continue in their ſins, as their inclination powerfully directs them; they would go on

in great wickedneſs and ſay, There is no hope. And thus we ſee, that even his ſuppoſition which ſeems to take moſt care of the cauſe of holineſs, leaves it not only in a naked and unguarded, but in a very deſperate condition.

Concerning a day of grace, thus much may be ſaid, and this is all that I can underſtand by it, (viz.) That in the life of a man, there are particular ſeaſons when he enjoys more of the outward means of grace, or advantages for the good of his ſoul, than at other times; that is, more conſtant opportunities of hearing the word, a more uſeful and affecting miniſtry, better company, warmer admonitions, and plainer warnings by divine Providence; more leiſure and conveniencies for reading, meditation, and prayer: or, if all this continue all his life-time, yet there are ſeaſons when the Spirit of God, by his common operations, does more powerfully convince of ſin, and ſtir up the conſcience to duty, and impreſs his word with more force upon the heart; but being oppoſed and reſiſted, he is grieved and departs, his workings grow daily fewer and feebler, or it may be he retires at once, and leaves the ſoul in a ſtupid frame, and returns no more.

Yet we could not ſay heretofore, That the Spirit of God in his former operations gave him a full and proximate ſufficiency of inward converting grace before, ſince it proved ſo inſufficient in the event, and ineffectual: nor can we ſay now, that his day of grace is quite paſt and gone; becauſe the Spirit of God, who is ſovereign in mercy, may return again.

Yet it is a very good motive to urge upon delaying ſinners, that it is a daring and dangerous piece of impiety and rebellion to quench the motions of the Holy Spirit; leſt he depart grieved, and never return again; leſt he never give them ſo fair an opportunity for converſion, never bring them ſo near again to the kingdom of heaven.

XIII. *God and Nature unſearchable.*

HOW poor and imperfect a creature is man! How unequal his knowledge of things! How large and

and almoſt immenſely diffuſive his acquaintance with ſome parts of nature, but how exceedingly limited and narrow in others! The man of learning, who has the higheſt temptations to pride, has alſo the moſt powerful motives to humility.

Man can meaſure the heavens, tell how many miles the planet Venus is diſtant from Jupiter, and how far the earth from the ſun. He has found out with certainty the periods of their revolutions, and the hour of their eclipſes; he can adjuſt the affairs of the planetary world to a moment, their vaſt variety of appearances, with all their prodigious circuits. But this great artiſt, MAN, is puzzled at a worm or a fly, a grain of ſand or a drop of water: there is not the leaſt atom in the whole creation, but has queſtions about it unſearchable by human nature; no, nor the leaſt part of empty ſpace, but ſets all the wiſeſt philoſophers at variance when they attempt to tell what it is, or whether it be any thing or nothing.

This ſort of talk, my neighbours will ſay, is a flouriſh of wit to teach us to undervalue our reaſon, a mere rant of rhetoric, an hyperbole of reproach to our underſtanding: but while I leave it to aſtronomers to confirm what I have ſaid concerning the vaſt extent of their acquaintance with the heavens, I ſhall make it appear, even to a demonſtration, that our knowledge of the things on earth is as mean as I have expreſt, in the literal and proper ſenſe.

There is not the leaſt grain of ſand on the ſhore, nor the leaſt atom in the whole creation, but has queſtions about it unſearchable by human nature.

This atom may be divided into millions of millions of pieces, and after all this the leaſt part of it will be infinitely diviſible. The infinite diviſibility of matter is ſo often proved and ſo univerſally granted by all modern philoſophers, that I need not ſtand to prove it here: yet that my unlearned readers may ſee and believe, I will ſet down a plain vulgar demonſtration or two of this matter.

I. IT is certain, that if matter be not infinitely diviſible, then there is, or may be, ſo ſmall a part of

matter which cannot be divided further: now take this ſuppoſed ſmalleſt part, this fancied atom, and put it between the points of a pair of compaſſes made of ſtiff and inflexible matter; it is evident that the legs of the compaſſes in leſs and leſs degrees will be divided aſunder quite to the centre; and from the points to the centre there is room for ſtill leſs and leſs pieces of matter to be put between the legs. Therefore that very ſuppoſed atom may be conceived to be divided ſtill further into leſs parts, and conſequently it was not indiviſible.

II. If there be any indiviſible part of matter, the ſhape of it muſt be ſpherical, or a perfect globe, wherein every part of the ſurface is equally diſtant from the centre; for if you ſuppoſe it of any other ſhape, then ſome parts of it will be farther from its centre than other parts; and all theſe longer parts may be ſhortened or pared off till every part be equally ſhort, or equally diſtant from the centre; that is, till it be reduced to a globe. Now, from the centre of this little globe to the ſurface, the parts of it are but half ſo long as from any part of the ſurface to its oppoſite part; and therefore this globe may be ſtill divided into two hemiſpheres or ſemicircles, which are not the ſmalleſt parts of matter that can be, becauſe they are not of a ſpherical figure, as in the beginning of the argument.

And then, by a repetition of the ſame reaſoning, thoſe little ſemicircles or half-globes, by paring off the parts which are fartheſt from their centre, may be reduced to ſmaller globes again, and thoſe ſmaller globes again divided in halves as before: there is no end of theſe diviſions, and therefore matter is infinitely diviſible.

To carry on this argument yet further, to the ſurpriſe of my unlearned readers; let us take notice, that all matter has three dimenſions in it, namely, length, breadth, and depth: now every part of matter, every grain of ſand, is infinitely diviſible as to each of theſe dimenſions; that is, every part which reſults from an finite diviſion of the length of it, may be yet again infinit ely

infinitely divided according to its breadth; thus the diviſion of this grain of ſand becomes infinitely infinite. And yet ſtill it may be further infinitely divided, according to the depth or thickneſs of it: thus the diviſibility of matter ſwells beyond all imagination, and is more than infinitely infinite, and that with reſiſtleſs evidence and aſtoniſhment to the eye of reaſon.

Go now, vain man, and find fault with any part of the creation of God, and play the fooliſh critic on his works of providence; go and cenſure the juſtice of his conduct towards Adam or any of his children, or blame the wiſdom of his inſtitutions in the diſpenſations of his grace: monſtrous arrogance, and proud impiety! Rather go firſt and learn what an atom is, or the meaneſt part of the duſt of this vaſt creation which God has made. It has ſomething of infinity in it; it confounds thee in perplexing darkneſs, and reaches far beyond all the little ſtretch of thy boaſted powers of reaſoning. Be dumb in ſilence, O vain creature! at the foot of this infinite and eternal Being, nor pretend to meaſure his ſteps, to cenſure his motions, and direct his conduct, till thou art better able to give an account of the duſt which he has put under the feet of the meaneſt of his ſlaves.

XIV. *The Diamond painted.*

HOW wide and unhappy a miſtake it is, when Chriſtians endeavour to adorn their pure divine worſhip by the mixture of it with ceremonies of human invention. The ſymbolical ordinances of the goſpel have a noble ſimplicity in them: their materials are water, bread and wine, three of the moſt neceſſary and valuable things in human life; and their myſtic ſenſe is plain, natural, and eaſy. By water we are cleanſed when we have been defiled; ſo by the grace of the holy ſpirit we are purified from ſin, which pollutes our ſouls in the ſight of God. By bread we are fed when we are hungry, and nouriſhed into ſtrength for ſervice: by wine we are refreſhed and revived when thirſty and fainting; ſo from the body of Chriſt, which was broken as

as an atoning ſacrifice, and his blood which was poured out for us, we derive our ſpiritual life and ſtrength. The application of theſe ſymbols is moſt ſimple, and natural alſo: we are commanded to waſh with the water, to eat the bread, and to drink the wine: moſt proper repreſentations of our participation of theſe benefits.

Thus much of figures and emblems did the all-wiſe God think proper to appoint and continue in his church, when he brake the yokes of Jewiſh bondage, and aboliſhed a multitude of rites and ceremonies of his own ancient appointment. How plain, how natural, how glorious, how divine are theſe two Chriſtian inſtitutions, Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper, if ſurveyed and praſtiſed in their original ſimplicity! but they are debaſed by the addition of any fantaſtic ornaments.

What think ye of all the gaudy trappings and golden finery that is mingled with the Chriſtian worſhip, by the imaginations of men in the church of Rome? Are they not like ſo many ſpots and blemiſhes caſt upon a fair jewel by ſome fooliſh painter? Let the colours be ever ſo ſprightly and glowing, and the luſtre of the paint ever ſo rich, yet if you place them on a diamond they are ſports and blemiſhes ſtill. Is not this a juſt emblem to repreſent all the gay airs, and rich and glittering accoutrements wherewith the church of Rome hath ſurrounded her devotions and her public religion?

The reformers of our worſhip in the church of England were much of this mind, for they boldly paſs this cenſure on many of the Popiſh ceremonies, that they entered into the church by indiſcreet devotion and zeal without knowledge: they blinded the people, and obſcured the glory of God, and are worthy to be cut away and clean rejected: that they did more confound and darken, than declare and ſet forth Chriſt's benefits unto us, and reduced us again to a ceremonial law, like that of Moſes, and to the bondage of figures and ſhadows: this is their ſentence and judgment concerning many of the Romiſh rites, in the preface to the book of Common Prayer. Happy had it been for Great Britain, if they had

had thought ſo concerning all of them ſince they had all the ſame or a worſe original, and they all tend to the ſame unhappy end! However, let others take their liberty of colouring all their jewels with what greens, and purples, and ſcarlets they pleaſe; but for my own part, I like a diamond beſt that has no paint upon it.

XV. *Bills of Exchange.* 1705.

WHEN a rich merchant, who dwells in a foreign land afar off, commits his treaſure to the hands of a banker, it is to be drawn out in ſmaller ſums by his ſervants or his friends here at home, as their neceſſities ſhall require; and he furniſhes them with bills of exchange drawn upon his banker or treaſurer, which are paid honourably to the perſon who offers the bill, according to the time when the words of the bill appoint the payment.

Is it not poſſible to draw a beautiful allegory hence, to repreſent the conduct of the bleſſed God in his promiſes of grace, without debaſing ſo divine a ſubject?

God the father, the ſpring and fountain of all grace, dwells in regions of light and holineſs inacceſſible, too far off for us to converſe with him or receive ſupplies from him in an immediate way; but he has ſent his Son to dwell in human nature, and conſtituted him Treaſurer of all his bleſſings, that we might derive perpetual ſupplies from his hand: he has intruſted him with all the riches of grace and glory; he has laid up infinite ſtores of love, wiſdom, ſtrength, pardon, peace, and conſolation, in the hands of his Son for this very purpoſe, to be drawn out thence as faſt as the neceſſities of his ſaints require. "It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell. He has received gifts for men." Col. i. 19. Pſal. lxviii. 18.

Now all the promiſes in the Bible are ſo many bills of exchange drawn by God the Father in heaven, upon his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and payable to every pious bearer; that is, to every one that comes to the mercy-ſeat, and offers the promiſe for acceptance, and pleads it in a way of obedient faith and prayer. Jeſus, the High-treaſurer of heaven, knows every letter of his Father's

Father's hand-writing, and can never be impoſed upon by a forged note; he will ever put due honour upon his Father's bills; he accepts them all, for all the promiſes in him are yea, and in him amen. In him they are all ſure to the glory of the Father, 2 Cor. i. 20. It is for the Father's honour that his bills never fail of acceptance and payment.

If you apply to the bleſſed Jeſus, and offer him a bill of the largeſt ſum, a promiſe of the biggeſt bleſſings, he will never ſay, "I have not ſo much of my "Father's treaſure in my hand." For he has received "all things." John iii. 35. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." And may I not venture to ſay, this whole treaſure is made over to the ſaints, "All things are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. And they are parcelled out into bills of promiſe, and notes under the Father's hand. So the whole treaſure of a nation ſometimes conſiſts in credit and in promiſſory notes, more than in preſent ſums of gold and ſilver.

Some of theſe divine bills are payable at ſight, and we receive the ſum as ſoon as we offer the bill; (viz.) thoſe that muſt ſupply our preſent wants; ſuch as, "Call upon me IN THE DAY of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me," Pſal. l. 15. and there have been many examples of ſuch ſpeedy payment. Pſal. cviii. 3. "IN THE DAY when I cried thou anſweredſt me; and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul."

Some are only payable in general at a diſtant time, and that is left to the diſcretion of Chriſt the Treaſurer. (viz.) "As thy day is, ſo thy ſtrength ſhall be," Deut. xxxiii. 25. And we need never fear truſting him long, for this bank in the hands of Chriſt can never fail; "For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9. and Epheſ. iii. 8. we are told of the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.

Sometimes Chriſt may put us off with a general kind anſwer, or give us a note under his hand, payable at demand, in ſeveral parcels inſtead of a full payment all at once: thus he dealt with his dear friend and ſervant Paul, in 2 Cor. xii. 9. Doubtleſs Paul in his ſeeking the Lord thrice, for the removal of his thorn in the fleſh, had pleaded ſeveral large promiſes of God, had offered

offered thoſe divine bills to Chriſt for acceptance and payment; but inſtead of this, our Lord gives him a note under his own hand, which ran in this language, "My grace is ſufficient for thee." And if we had but the faith which that bleſſed apoſtle had, we might live upon this hope; this would be as good as preſent payment: for if he delay to give the full ſum, it is only becauſe he ſees we have not need of it at preſent: he knows our neceſſities better than we ourſelves; he will not truſt us with too much at once in our hands; but he pays us thoſe bills when he ſees the fitteſt time, and we have often found it ſo, and confeſſed his faithfulneſs.

At other times he pays us, but not in the ſame kind of mercy which is mentioned in the promiſe, yet in ſomething more uſeful and valuable. If the promiſe mentions a temporal bleſſing, he may give us a ſpiritual one; if it expreſs eaſe, he may give patience: and thus his Father's bills are always honoured, and we have no reaſon to complain. So the banker may diſcharge a bill of a hundred pound, not with money, but with ſuch goods and merchandize as may yield us two hundred, and we gladly confeſs the bill is well paid.

Some of theſe promiſes, theſe bills of heavenly treaſure are not made payable till the hour of our death, as, "Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants whom, when the Lord comes, he ſhall find watching, &c. Luke xii. 37. He that endureth to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved, Matth. xxiv. 13. Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Rev. ii. 10.

Others are not due till the day of the reſurrection; as, "Them who ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. I will redeem them from death, Hoſ. xiii. 14. Col. iii. 4. When Chriſt who is our life ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory. Phil. iii. 20, 21. He ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body. 1 Peter v. 1, 4. And when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Now when the great day ſhall come, in which our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhall give up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, and render an account of all his ſtewardſhip, how fair will his books appear! how juſt

a balance will ſtand at the foot of all his accounts! Then ſhall he ſhew in what manner he has fulfilled the promiſes to the ſaints, and preſent to the Father all the bills that he has received and diſcharged; while all the ſaints ſhall with one voice atteſt it, to the honour of the High-treaſurer of heaven, that he has not failed in payment even to the ſmalleſt farthing.

XVI. *The Saints unknown in this World.*

OUT of the millions of mankind that ſpread over the earth in every age, the great God has been pleaſed to take ſome into his own family, has given them a heavenly and divine nature, and made them his ſons and his daughters. But he has ſet no outward mark of glory upon them; there is nothing in their figure or in their countenance to diſtinguiſh them from the rabble of mankind. And it is fit that they ſhould be in ſome meaſure unknown among their fellow mortals: their character and dignity is too ſacred and ſublime to be made public here on earth, where the circumſtances that attend them are generally ſo mean and deſpicable. Divine wiſdom has appointed the other world for the place of their full diſcovery; there they ſhall appear like themſelves, in ſtate, equipage, and array, becoming the children of God and heirs of heaven.

Their bleſſed Lord himſelf, who is God's firſt born Son, was a mere ſtranger and unknown amongſt men; he laid aſide the rays of divinity and the form of a God, when he came down to dwell with men, and he took upon him the form of a ſervant. He wore no divine majeſty on his face, no ſparks of Godhead beaming from his eyes, no glaring evidence of his high dignity in all his outward appearance. Therefore the world knoweth us not, becauſe it knew him not. But he ſhall be known and adored when he comes in the glory of his Father, with legions of angels; and we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him. The life of the ſaints is hidden with Chriſt in God: but when Chriſt, who is their life, ſhall appear, they alſo ſhall appear with him in glory. I John iii. 1, 2. Col. iii. 3, 4. In

that day they ſhall ſtand forth before the whole creation in fair evidence, they ſhall ſhine in diſtinguiſhed light, and appear veſted in their own undoubted honours. But here it ſeems proper there ſhould be ſomething of a cloud upon them, both upon the account of the men of this world, and upon their own account too, as well as in conformity to Chriſt Jeſus their Lord.

Firſt, Upon their own account, becauſe the preſent ſtate of a Chriſtian is a ſtate of trial. We are not to walk by ſight as the ſaints above and angels do; they know they are poſſeſſed of life and bleſſedneſs, for they ſee God himſelf near them, Chriſt in the midſt of them, and glory all around them. Our work is to live by faith, and therefore God has not made either his love to us, or his grace in us, ſo obvious and apparent to ourſelves, as that every Chriſtian, even the weak and the unwatchful, ſhould be fully aſſured of his ſalvation. He has not appointed the principle of life within us to ſparkle in ſo divine a manner, as to be always ſelf-evident to the beſt of Chriſtians, much leſs to the lukewarm and the backſlider. It is fit that it ſhould not be too ſenſibly manifeſt, becauſe it is ſo ſenſibly imperfect, that we might examine ourſelves whether we are in the faith, and prove ourſelves, whether Chriſt, as a principle of life, dwell in us, or no. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. While ſo many ſnares and ſins and dangers attend us, and mingle with our ſpiritual life, there will be ſome thing of darkneſs ready to riſe and obſcure it, that ſo we may maintain a holy jealouſy and ſolicitude about our own ſtate, that we may ſearch with diligence to find whether we have divine life or no, and be called and urged often to look inwards.

This degree of remaining darkneſs, and the doubtful ſtate of a ſlothful Chriſtian, is ſometimes of great uſe to ſpur him onward in his race of holineſs, and quicken him to aſpire after the higheſt meaſures of the ſpiritual life; that when its acts are more vigorous, it may ſhine with the brighteſt evidence, and give the ſoul of the believer full ſatisfaction and joy. It ſerves alſo to awaken the drowſy Chriſtian to keep a holy watch over his heart and practice, leſt ſin and temptation make a foul inroad upon his divine life, ſpread ſtill

a thicker cloud over his beſt hopes, and break the peace of his conſcience. Though the principle of grace be not always ſelf-evident, yet we are required to give diligence, to make and to keep it ſure. 2 Pet. i. 10.

And as it was proper that every little ſeed of grace ſhould not ſhine with ſelf ſufficient and conſtant evidence, on the account of the Chriſtian himſelf, ſo, *ſecondly*, it was fit that their ſtate and dignity ſhould not be too obvious to the men of the world, that they might neither adore nor deſtroy the ſaints. A principle of ſuperſtition might tempt ſome weaker ſouls to pay extravagant honours to the Chriſtian, if he carried heaven in his face, and it were viſible in his countenance that he was a ſon of God. On the other hand, the malicious and perverſe part of mankind might imitate the rage of Satan, and attempt the ſooner to deſtroy the ſaint.

This was the caſe of the bleſſed Paul. When he had wrought a miracle at Lyſtra, and appeared with ſomething divine about him, when he had healed the cripple by a mere word of command, the people cried out with exalted voices, the gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men. Immediately they made a Mercury of St Paul, they turned Barnabas into Jupiter, and the prieſt brought oxen and garlands to the gates to have done ſacrifice to them: this was the humour of the ſuperſtitious Gentiles. But in ſeveral of the Jews, their malice and envy wrought a very different effect; for they perſuaded the people into fury, ſo that they ſtoned the bleſſed apoſtle, and drew him out of the city for dead. Acts xiv.

Thus it fared with our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf in the days of his fleſh. For the moſt part he lived unknown among men, he did not cry nor make his voice to be heard in the ſtreets; but when he diſcovered himſelf to them on any ſpecial occaſion, the people ran into different extremes. When the characters of the Meſſiah appeared with evidence upon him, they would have raiſed him to a throne, and made an earthly king of him. John vi. 15. At another time, when his holy conduct did not ſuit their humour, they were filled with wrath, and led him to the brow of a hill to caſt him down headlong. Luke iv. 29. Therefore our bleſſed

bleſſed Lord did not walk through the ſtreets and tell the world he was the Meſſiah; but by degrees he let the characters of his million appear upon him, and diſcovered himſelf in wiſdom, as his diſciples and the world could bear it, and as the Father had appointed.

Let us imitate our bleſſed Lord, and copy after ſo divine a pattern; let our works bear a bright and growing witneſs to our inward and real Chriſtianity. This is ſuch a gentle ſort of evidence, that though it may work conviction in the hearts of ſpectators, yet it does not ſtrike the ſenſe with ſo glaring a light as to dazzle the weaker ſort who behold it into ſuperſtitious folly; nor does it give ſuch provocation to the envy of the malicious, as if the ſaints had borne the ſign of their high dignity in ſome more ſurpriſing manner in their figure or countenance.

I might add alſo, There is ſomething in this ſort of evidence in their ſainthip that carries more true honour in it, than if ſome heavenly name had been written in their forehead, or their ſkin had ſhone like the face of Moſes when he came down from the mount. It is a more ſublime glory for a prince to be found amongſt the vulgar in undiſtinguiſhed raiment, and by his ſuperior conduct and ſhining virtues to force the world to confeſs that he is the ſon of a king, than to walk through the rabble with enſigns of royalty, and demand honour from them by the mere blaze of his ornaments.

XVII. *Praiſe waiteth for thee, O God in Sion.*

Pſalm lxv. 1.

AND does praiſe wait for God in the congregation of his ſaints? Surely it doth not uſe to be ſo. Mercy uſes to be beforehand with us, and the Lord waiteth to be gracious. Mercy is wont to be ready in the hands of God, before praiſe is ready on the tongues of men; and we are ſure he waited on us to ſhew his grace, long before we had any ſongs ready for him, or any thought of praiſing him.

Yet ſometimes it is ſo in this lower world. Holy ſouls may be waiting at the throne of grace, with their praiſes ready to aſcend as ſoon as mercy appears: mercy may be ſilent for a ſeaſon, and then praiſe for a ſeaſon is ſilent too. This is the original language of the Pſalm, and this the ſtate of things, when the pſalmiſt wrote; Praiſe is ſilent for thee, in Zion. When the church of God under trouble has been long ſeeking any particular bleſſing or deliverance, and God's appointed hour of ſalvation is not yet come, then the ſongs of the church are ſilent: Yet ſhe ſtands watching and waiting for the deſired moment, that ſhe may meet the ſalvation with praiſe.

But why ſhould God ſuffer praiſe to be ſilent at all in Zion? Is not the church the habitation of his praiſes? Yes, but it is the houſe of prayer too: prayer and patience muſt have their proper exerciſe. If praiſe were never ſilent on earth, where would there be any room for prayer to ſpeak? When would there be any ſeaſon for the grace of patience to ſhew itſelf? God loves prayer as well as praiſe: his ſovereignty is honoured by humble waiting, as well as his goodneſs by holy gratitude and joy. If praiſe be ſilent, then let prayer be more fervent. The abſent Saviour loves to hear the voice of his beloved; the lips of the church muſt never be quite ſilent, though they are not always employed in hallelujahs.

Praiſe is the ſweeteſt part of divine worſhip; it is a ſhort heaven here on earth. God lets our praiſes be ſilent ſometimes, to teach us that this is not a ſtate of complete bleſſedneſs. After the great day of deciſion, praiſe ſhall be continual and unceaſing, when there ſhall be no more ſighing for the ſaints, no more death, no more pain. Then churches ſhall want ordinances no more, nor ſaints abſtain from the bread of life. Jeſus their everlaſting Paſtor ſhall feed them, in paſtures ever green, and from the tree of life, and lead them to the fountains of joy and the ſtreams where eternal pleaſures run. O may our ſouls wait with joyful hope for that day! and our praiſes ſhall not be ſilent.

Yet it is not with the church as it is with the world when praiſe is ſilent in both. It is ever ſilent among the

the wicked, becauſe they are forgetful of God their Maker; it is only ſilent among the ſaints for a ſeaſon, when their God ſeems to frown and hide himſelf, and (as it were) to forget his people.

Beſides, Let us conſider that all praiſe is not ſilent there. Daily incenſe ariſes before God in the temple, though particular thank-offerings wait till particular mercies are received. Praiſe for all the greateſt mercies, (viz.) for redeeming grace, for electing love, for the ſanctifying Spirit, is never ſilent in Zion. Pſal. lxxxiv. 4. "Bleſſed are they that dwell in thine houſe: they will be ſtill praiſing thee." But praiſe for ſome ſpecial favours may be ſilent for a ſeaſon, as well as that large revenue of praiſe that ſhall grow due at the accompliſhment of all the promiſes and the conſummation of bleſſedneſs.

Again, The praiſes of God are ſilent in the world without any deſign of breaking forth; but the ſilence of the church longs to be loſt in joyful ſongs of thankſgiving. It is like an engine charged with praiſe, that wants only the warm touch of mercy to make it ſhine with the glories of heavenly worſhip, and ſound aloud the name of the God of Zion.

Sometimes God is as well pleaſed that praiſe ſhould wait with humble ſilence, as that it ſhould ſpeak. It ſhews a well-diſpoſed frame and temper of ſoul, that longs to honour God. The hearts of his ſaints are inſtruments of muſic to the Lord; he has formed their ſouls for his glory, and tuned their heart-ſtrings to his own praiſe. Now he loves to ſee them kept ſtill in tune, though he does not always play his own praiſes upon them; he neither wants our ſervices nor our ſongs, for his own perfections are an everlaſting harmony to himſelf, without the ſlender notes that we can ſound.

We may make this ſweet remark at laſt, that Zion on earth ſhall be joined to Jeruſalem above; the family below ſhall be joined to the upper houſe, for they have learnt the work of heaven, their hearts are tuned to praiſe; they want only ſuch harps as angels have, to bring glory down and make a heaven on this earth. In the 1 Chron. xi. 4. we are told that David took

Zion from the Jebuſites, and built it round about, and added it to Jeruſalem. So ſhall Jeſus the true David, the King of ſaints, take this earthly Zion from the powers of this wicked world, and ſhall build and adorn it around with glory and ſtrength, with perfect beauty and complete grace, and add it to the Jeruſalem which is above. Look upwards O ſouls who are full of praiſes, and are even impatient to ſpeak the glories of your God, look to Jeruſalem above, where praiſe is conſtant and never ceaſing, and rejoice to think that you ſhall be made inhabitants of that city, and united to the glorious church! It is your chief pleaſure here to be praiſing your God, and it is the chief pleaſure of your fellow-ſaints on high: where happineſs is perfect, praiſe is perfect too and never ſilent.

It is the chief delight of happy ſouls there to run over the glories of their God, and tell one another joyfully, and humbly tell their God, what a wiſe, what a holy, what an almighty and all-gracious God he is. Every breath of praiſe is a new gale of pleaſure there; it is ſweet breathing in air perfumed with praiſes, and this climate is moſt agreeable to your new nature and your conſtitution, you that are members and parts of Zion; and you ſhall be tranſlated thither to your kindred ſoule In heaven, the river of pleaſure ſprings from God's right hand, becauſe Jeſus the Saviour ſits there. It is a river that makes glad the city of God, and every ſtream, as it flows along the golden ſtreets, murmurs ſweet praiſes to the fountain.

But heaven and the ſtate of glory are not yet complete: the church waits above for many promiſes that are not yet fulfilled, and future bleſſings that are yet unknown. The work of grace is not finiſhed till the great reſurrection-day; and heaven itſelf, in all the bliſsful regions of it, waits for ſuch praiſes as the ears of men or angels have never yet heard.

While the whole church of God on earth is in a ſtate of imperfection and trial, a ſtate of ſins and ſorrows, praiſe waits in all the ſanctuaries below, and in Zion above too. The ſouls in glory wait for complete ſalvation, and the redemption of their bodies from the grave. On the harps of angels praiſe ſits waiting,

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and it waits alſo on the tongue of Jeſus the Interceſſor. His prayers ſhall one day change all at once into praiſes, and lift the praiſes of angels and of embodied ſaints to higher notes than ever yet they knew. O the voices, and the ſongs, the joys, the raptures of that moment, of that day, of that eternity, when ſuch a multitude of praiſes ſhall burſt out at once, which have been waiting long in that Zion, and ſhall become an everlaſting praiſe! When Jeſus the Son of God, the Mediator, ſhall lead the worſhip; and the praiſes that have been growing theſe ſeventeen hundred years on his tongue ſhall break forth and ſpread themſelves abroad, and all the creation ſhall hear, and all echo to this ſong, "Glory to God in the higheſt!" This is what we wait and hope for, and long to bear a part in thoſe pleaſures and thoſe praiſes.

XVIII. Job xxiii. 3. *O that I knew where I might find him!*

AMONG all the various kinds and orders of God's intellectual creation, there is not one that uſes this language beſides a mourning ſaint in this lower world. As for all other ſpirits, whether dwelling in fleſh or not, their wiſhes are expreſſed in a very different manner; nor do they ſeek and long to find out an abſent God.

If we aſcend up to heaven, and inquire there what are the wiſhes of thoſe bleſſed ſpirits, we ſhall find that their enjoyments are ſo glorious, and their ſatisfactions riſe ſo high in the immediate preſence of God amongſt them, that they have nothing of this nature left to wiſh for: they know that their God is with them, and all their wiſh is, what they are aſſured to enjoy, That this God will be with them for ever.

If we deſcend to the regions of hell, where God reigns in vengeance, we ſhall hear thoſe unhappy ſpirits groaning out many a faithful wiſh, "O that I knew "where I might avoid him, that I might get out of "his ſight, out of his notice and reach for ever! I "feel his dreadful preſence, and O that it were poſ-

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" ſible for me to be utterly abſent from him, and to " find a place where God is not!"

If we take the wings of the morning, and fly to the utmoſt parts of the eaſtern or the weſtern world, we ſhall find the language of thoſe ignorant Heathens, " O that I knew where I might find food, and plen- " ty, and all ſenſual delights!" but they ſend not a wiſh after the great God, though he has been ſo many ages abſent from them and their fathers. He is unknown to them, and they have no deſires working in them after an unknown God.

If we tarry at home and ſurvey the bulk of mankind around us, the voice of their wiſhes ſounds much the ſame as that of the Heathen world, " O that I " knew where I might find trade and merchandiſe, " riches and honours, corn, wine, and oil, the neceſ- " ſaries or the ſuperfluous luxuries of life!" But God is not in all their thoughts. If they frequent the temples, and attend the ſeaſons of worſhip, they are well enough ſatisfied with outward forms without the ſight of God in them. There is no natural man that with a ſincere longing of ſoul cries out, " O that I knew " where to find him!"

As for the children of God that live in the light of their Father's countenance, they walk with him daily and hourly, they behold him near them by the eye of faith, and they feel the ſweet influences of his gracious preſence; their higheſt ambition and their deareſt wiſhes are, " Oh that he might abide for ever with me, " and keep me for ever near to himſelf!"

The words of this ſcripture therefore can only be the language of a ſaint on earth in diſtreſs and darkneſs; when God who was wont to viſit him with divine communications, and to meet him in his addreſſes to the throne of grace, has withdrawn himſelf for a ſeaſon, and left the ſoul to grapple with many difficulties alone.

This was the caſe of that holy man, whoſe ſorrows and complaints have furniſhed out almoſt a whole book of ſcripture, and ſupplied the ſaints in all ſucceeding ages with the forms and ſpeeches of pious mourning. It is the voice of a ſacred impatience that Job here utters,

utters, "O that I knew where I might find him!" and by a plain paraphraſe we may learn both the meaning and the reaſon of ſuch language, and be taught by his example to lament after an abſent God.

Let us ſuppoſe the ſaint therefore pouring out his ſoul in ſuch ſort of expreſſions as theſe, in which I ſhall not entirely confine myſelf to the darkneſs of the patriarchal diſpenſation under which Job lived, but indulge the language of the New Teſtament, and perſonate a mourning Chriſtian.

"Time was when I had a God near me, and upon every new diſtreſs and difficulty I made him my preſent refuge; I was wont to call upon him in an hour of darkneſs, and he ſhone upon my path with divine light. He has often taught me to read my duty in his providences, or in his word, or by ſome ſecret hints of his own Spirit, even while I have been kneeling at the throne of grace: but now I find not my uſual ſigns and tokens, my guide and my counſellor is withdrawn. "O that I knew where I might find him!"

"He was once my kind aſſiſtant in every duty, and my ſupport under every burden: I have found the grace of my Lord ſufficient for me in my ſharpeſt conflicts, his ſtrength has appeared in my weakneſs. When my ſpiritual enemies have beſet me round, he has ſcattered them before me, or ſubdued them under me; and being held up by his everlaſting arms, I have ſtood my ground, and borne up my head under the weight of heavy ſorrows: but now I am attacked on all ſides, my ſoul wreſtles hard with ſins and temptations, and I find no aſſiſtance, no victory: I ſink under my preſent ſorrows; for my God, my ſtrength, and my comforter, is abſent, and afar off. "O that I knew where I "might find him!"

"My God was wont to deal with me as a compaſſionate friend; when Satan accuſed, he has juſtified. He has ſhown me the all-ſufficient ſacrifice of his Son, and that ſpotleſs righteouſneſs of his which has anſwered all the demands of his own holy law, and cancelled all the charges of guilt that the devil, or my own conſcience could bring againſt me. He has taught me by faith to put my ſoul under the ſprinklings of this

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ſacred blood, and to wrap around me the robe of this divine righteouſneſs; he himſelf has arrayed me in garments of ſalvation: but now the army of my ſins riſes up before me and overwhelms my ſpirit with many terrors; Satan the accuſer urges on the charge, and my Saviour and his righteouſneſs are as it were hidden from me. "O that I knew where I might find "him!"

"Many a cenſure have I borne from men, and had my reputation aſſaulted and my good name blackened with many a ſcandal. But when man reproached me, God has undertook my cauſe, and made my righteouſneſs ſhine as the light, and my innocence as the noonday; I could then pour out my ſoul before him, tell him all my ſorrows in flowing language, and feel ſweet relief: but now, alas! troubles and reproaches are multiplied upon me, and he does not ſeem to take my part; my ſpirit is bound and ſhut up, and I am cut off from that free converſe, that humble holy intimacy which I once enjoyed with my God; I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no judgment. Will he not help me to pray? Will he not hear my groans and requeſts? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? yet I would ſeek his face ſtill, and "O that I knew where I might find him!"

"Often have I ſeen him in his own ordinances in the place of public worſhip; I have ſeen his power and his glory in the ſanctuary: I have found him in ſecret corners, and my meditation of him has been exceedingly ſweet. In dark retirements he has ſmiled on my ſoul, and has often given me reviving light. I have found him in his works, and I have had a fairer ſight of him in his word; I can name the places, the pleaſant lines in my Bible, and ſay, "I have ſeen the "face of my God here:" but now the Bible itſelf is like a ſealed book, or like a ſtrange language which I cannot underſtand; I hear not the voice of my God ſpeaking to me there; I go forward to his promiſes, and read what he will do for his people, but I perceive him not; backward to his paſt providences, or to my own experiences, and review what he has done, but there is a darkneſs too: I turn to my left-hand amongſt his

his works of nature, but I do not ſee him; I ſeek him on my right-hand amongſt his works of grace, but ſtill he hides himſelf that I cannot behold him, ver. 8, 9 "I wander in the night and inquire after "him, I watch for him more than they that watch "for the morning, I ſay more than they that watch "for the morning; O that I knew where I might "find him!"

"And it is no wonder that I am ſo impatient under the painful ſenſe of his preſent diſtance from me, and ſo importunate for his return: for I have known the dreadful caſe of utter diſtance from him in a ſtate of nature and ſin, and I have taſted ſomething of the pleaſure of being brought nigh by grace; and now I dread every thing that looks like the old diſtance, that eſtrangement; I would fain renew thoſe divine pleaſures of a returning and a reconciled God: "O that "I knew where I might find him!"

"Beſides, I bethink myſelf and ſay, "What ſhall "I do without a God!" for I find all creatures utterly inſufficient to relieve and help me; and I have known ſomething of God's all-ſufficiency; he has been my helper in ſix troubles and in ſeven; he is my only hope: when creatures ſtand aloof from me, and each of them ſay, "There is no help in me," whither ſhould I go then but to my God? "O that I "knew where I might find him!"

"I have been ſo much uſed to live upon him, and found his divine aids and influences ſo neceſſary to my life and my peace, that I ſink and die at his abſence. I feel within myſelf a ſort of heavenly inſtinct that I want his preſence, and cannot live without him. I know he ſtands in no need of me, for he gives to all his creatures life and breath, and being; but I need his counſels and his comforts, his ſtrength and his love: my ſoul is touched with ſuch a divine influence, that it cannot reſt while God withdraws, as the needle trembles and hunts after the hidden loadſtone. If my God retire and hide myſelf, he will forgive a creature that loves him ſo well as to follow hard after him without ceaſing, and is impatient and reſtleſs till he

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ſearch him out; "O that I knew where I might find "him!"

"Though God is pleaſed to depart from me for a ſeaſon, yet I cannot let go all my hope; he hides himſelf from my ſoul, yet I dare not think him an enemy, but only a concealed friend: if I could get near him even to his ſeat, I know I ſhould find it a mercy-ſeat, though perhaps judgment may ſit there too. It is a throne of grace, ſays a Chriſtian, becauſe Jeſus is there with the blood of atonement: and having ſuch an High-prieſt over the houſe of God, and ſuch a new and living way of acceſs by the blood of Chriſt, I will ſeek after him and addreſs myſelf to him; I will confeſs mine iniquities before him, and be ſorry for my ſins, which may have beclouded or eclipſed my heavenly Sun, and hid his face from me; I fear I have grieved his bleſſed ſpirit, and provoked him to withdraw his kind influences of light, ſtrength, and comfort; nor will I ceaſe grieving for his abſence till he return again.

"Come, O eternal Spirit, come and viſit my poor dark and diſconſolate ſoul; come and awaken all my powers to follow hard after my Father and my God! Come, invigorate my faith, and lead me to the Mediator, the bleſſed Jeſus; come, open to me the promiſes, and let me into the covenant of his unchangeable love, ratified and ſealed with blood. If ever I find my God again, it is there, I know, I muſt find him: Chriſt is the only way to the Father. It is by the intereſt of his Son I ſhall get near to him, even to his ſeat; then will I pour out all my woes and my wants in his ſight, I will order my cauſe before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. Will he plead againſt me with his great power? No, but he will put ſtrength in me, and aſſiſt and ſuffer me to prevail with him.

"Then, when I have found him whom my ſoul loveth, I will hold him faſt and not let him go: I will charge all the powers and paſſions of my nature not to yield to one ſinful practice, nor provoke him to depart; for he is my everlaſting and my almighty Friend.

"Then, though I ſhould have a thouſand enemies ſet themſelves againſt me, I would not be afraid; yea, though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil, for I have found my God, and my God is with me."

XIX. *The Figure of a Cherub.*

A Cherub is a name uſed in ſcripture to denote ſome angelic power or powers under the figure of ſome ſtrange animal: the plural number in the Hebrew is cherubim, which ſignifies cherubs, and I know not how our tranſlators of the Bible came ſo often to ſpeak of cherubims, adding an *s* to the Hebrew plural number inſtead of the Engliſh plural, (viz.) cherubs. Perhaps ſome learned writers uſing the word cherubini in Latin, inſtead of cherubi, might lead them into this grammatical irregularity.

The Jews themſelves greatly differ about the form or figure of a cherub. Joſephus, in his Antiq. b. III. chap. 6. tells us, that cherubs are flying animals, like to none that were ſeen by men, and whoſe form no man knoweth. Abenezra, a learned Jew, ſuppoſes it to be a general name, extending itſelf to all forms or figures; though in the writings of Moſes he ſuppoſes it to come nearer the figure of a young man or boy.

Some have imagined, that the mere face of a boy with wings, is ſufficient to deſcribe a cherub; and accordingly ſuch figures are wrought into the ornaments of buildings and curtains, &c.; but I know no juſt ground for this imagination, except it be that thoſe on the ark were beaten out of the ſame maſs of gold which made the mercy-ſeat: and it muſt be confeſſed, this ſort of figure is more eaſy to be thus formed than any tall ſhape with a body and feet. Exod. xxv. 19. and xxviii. 7.

It is generally repreſented in ſcripture like ſome ſtrange living creature with one or more faces, having both wings and feet: when it has four faces, they are borrowed from a man, an ox, a lion, and an eagle: the wings are deſcribed as very large, and the feet, when they are particularly deſcribed, are like thoſe of

an ox or a calf: but whether the whole figure be more like that of an ox or of a man, the learned are not agreed. This is certain, that the ſeveral ſcriptures wherein cherubs are mentioned can hardly be reconciled, without ſuppoſing them repreſented in different forms, ſometimes nearer to one of theſe forms, and ſometimes to the other. If, therefore, after all our ſearches, we cannot come to a full determination, we muſt be content to acknowledge our ignorance, though perhaps by diligent inquiry we may come pretty near to the truth.

If we conſult the derivation of the word, it ſeems to come from כָּרַב charah, which in the Chaldee, Syric, and Arabic languages, ſignifies to plow, which is the known work of oxen. This favours the ſentiment of thoſe who deſcribe it as a flying ox.

Others tell us, that כְּרוּב cherub, in Arabic, is a ſhip that carries merchandiſe, and that a cherub is a chariot of God, appointed to carry the ſhechinah, or bright glory, which is the ſymbol of God's preſence: and therefore God is ſaid to ride upon a cherub. Pſal. xviii. 11. רָכַב עַל כְּרוּב jirchab al cherub, he rode on a cherub, and Pſal. civ. 3. it is ſaid, he maketh the clouds his chariot, רֶכֶב rechub; ſo that by the tranſpoſition of a letter, which is frequent with the Hebrews, it ſeems to ſignify a chariot: and in 1 Chron. xxviii. 18. the cherubs upon the ark are called the chariot of the cherubim, and the whole figure in Ezekiel's viſion had wheels all about it as a chariot; and yet it is ſometimes called the cherub in the ſingular, and ſometimes cherubim or cherubs.

All this is true; but in a chariot there are generally ſome animals repreſented as moving, drawing, or carrying it. And though in Ezekiel's viſion it is a living or animated chariot, with living wheels which had the ſpirit of the animals in them, Ezek. i. 20. yet there are winged animals to move it, or to move with it. The whole is compoſed of four living creatures which had faces and wings, and feet and hands, joined together in a living machine with wheels, and the God of glory rode upon it. But let us proceed and conſider

conſider ſeveral ſcriptures more particularly and in order.

The firſt place where we find the name mentioned is Gen. iii. ult. God placed cherubs and a flaming ſword to guard the way to the tree of life. This does not ſeem to mean a chariot or chariots, but living creatures: if they were in the ſhape of men, then a flaming ſword is waving in their hands. If in the form of flying oxen, then with flames about them flaſhing out like a ſword from their eyes, noſtrils, or mouth. Perhaps the brazen-footed bulls breathing out flames which guarded the golden fleece in Colchos, may be derived hence by the fabulous Greeks.

—— *Adamantéis volcanum naribus efflant æripides tauri.*
OVID.

Or, as the Greeks were wont to compound and divide ſtories at pleaſure, theſe bulls might keep the gardens of the Heſperides where the golden apples grew, that is, by the fabling interpretation, the fruit of the tree of life; though generally I confeſs a dragon is made the guardian of them; which wild fable might ariſe from the ſerpent being there, Gen. iii. 1. for ſtories taken from the Bible are variouſly mangled and confounded by the Heathens.

Some have ſuppoſed, indeed, theſe cherubs and flaming ſword are only a flaming diviſion viſible, made of burning pitch and ſuch materials, and that this was kindled in the borders of that ground to guard it from men, and that it is attributed to angels after the Jewiſh manner: others think it the divine Shechinah itſelf guarding the paſſage to the tree of life, and cherubs are added by Moſes to repreſent God's being attended with inviſible angels. But neither of theſe two laſt ſuppoſitions carry probability with them, becauſe the word cherub is never uſed in narratives for mere inviſible powers, nor for viſible inanimate beings; but it always ſignifies ſome viſible figure of one animated being or more joined together, though it is deſigned to denote theſe inviſible angelic powers.

The next ſcripture where it is mentioned is Exod. xxv. 18. Among the orders given to Moſes for making the ark and the mercy-ſeat, with the two cherubs to cover it with their wings, one at one end and the other at the other end. Ver. 19, 20. * And whatſoever figure belonged to theſe cherubs, which is ſo much unknown to us, it was certainly a common idea and well known figure to the Jews in that day; for Moſes doth not concern himſelf to give any particular deſcription of them as he does almoſt every thing elſe, and yet the Jewiſh artificers made them right.

Some think that theſe two cherubs on the ark were in the ſhape of flying oxen, or ſomething near to that figure, and that for theſe reaſons:

1. Becauſe both their faces looked toward one another, and yet both faces downward toward the mercy-ſeat, Exod. xxv. 20. and xxxvii. 9. which poſture and deſcription is well ſuited to an ox, but not ſo happily adapted to the figure and aſpect of the face of a man.

2. Becauſe the ſame face which is called the face of an ox, Ezek. i. 10. is called the face of a cherub, Ezek. x. 14. and thus a cherub's face is actually and expreſsly diſtinguiſhed from that of a man, and determined to be the face of an ox.

3. Becauſe God is ſaid to ride upon a cherub, Pſal. xviii. 10. Though this be a metaphorical expreſſion to deſcribe the grandeur and majeſty of God, yet the metaphor muſt be derived from ſome correſpondent ſenſible figure: now the figure of a winged ox, or at leaſt of a chariot carried or drawn by winged oxen, is a much fitter

* The cherubs in Solomon's temple ſtand in another ſituation, 1 Kings vi. 23. for they are placed ſide by ſide, ſo that their four wings reached the whole length of the moſt holy place. But theſe ſeem to be made as ſome further attendants on the Shechinah or divine glory, beſides the two cherubs which were on the mercy-ſeat; for it was the very ſame ark which Moſes made that was introduced into Solomon's temple, 1 Kings viii. 6. and the cherubs on it were beaten out of the ſame maſs of gold which made the mercy-ſeat or covering of the ark, Exod xxxvii. 7. 8. ſo that it is moſt likely thoſe ancient cherubs continued there ſtill, and Solomon's were additional attendants in the moſt holy place, of a much larger ſize, and over-ſhadowing thoſe on the mercy-ſeat.

fitter vehicle to ride upon in glory and grandeur, in majeſty and terror, than the figure of a man.

4. Aarons calf is reaſonably ſuppoſed to be a cherub; for neither he nor his abettors can well be imagined ſo fooliſh as to make the figure of a mere calf, as ſome would have it, or of the Egyptian god Apis, who was worſhipped under the form of an ox, when it was made as an idol for the Iſraelites to adore; ſince the Egyptian gods as well as men partook of the vengeance of the God of Iſrael for the oppreſſion of his people. Numb. xxxiii. 4.

It is therefore much more credible that Aaron's calf was deſigned as a viſible ſymbol of the preſence of the God of Iſrael, even that very God who releaſed them from their Egyptian maſters. The proclamation made before this image was this, "Theſe are thy Gods, O Iſrael, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt," Exod. xxxii. 4. It would be contrary to all reaſon to repreſent the Egyptian gods as bringing Iſrael from Egypt, for then they would have been kinder to the Iſraelites who were ſtrangers, than they were to their own worſhippers the Egyptians. Beſides, it was a feaſt to Jehovah, the God of Iſrael, which they celebrated, Exod. xxxii. 5. And therefore it is more likely that Aaron's calf was ſome ſymbol of the preſence of the God of Iſrael; and that it might be the figure of a cherub, on or over which they would ſuppoſe the divine Shechinah or glory of God to ſit; for ſo it appeared on the ark when it was made, and ſo it appeared in Ezekiel's viſions. Ezek. i. 26.—28. and x. 18, 19. So David deſcribes it Pſal. xviii. 10. when the God of Iſrael rode on a cherub.

Shall it be ſaid, that Aaron had not yet received the order for making the cherubs on the ark, and therefore could not know the figures? But I anſwer, that cherubs were well known to the Jews of that age, as I hinted before, ſince Moſes gives no deſcription of them to inſtruct the artificers. They were known of old probably to the patriarchs and to mankind as emblems of divine majeſty and terror, guarding the way to the tree of life. Gen. iii. 24. And ſome have ſuppoſed that Aaron with his ſons and the ſeventy elders ſaw God i

the mount, Exod. xxiv. 10. riding on a cherub as in Ezek. i. ſince the other part of that deſcription of God in Exodus is much like that in Ezekiel 1. 26. and x. 1. But I proceed to another argument to prove cherubs to be flying oxen.

5. Another reaſon why a cherub is ſuppoſed to be a winged ox is this, Jeroboam the king of Iſrael is moſt reaſonably ſuppoſed to imitate the worſhip of Jeruſalem, when he ſet up golden calves at Dan and Bethel, and thus to repreſent God dwelling between the cherubs on the mercy ſeat; that the other tribes of Iſrael might have the ſame worſhip as the Jews at Jeruſalem, and that the ten tribes might not be inclined to go up to Jeruſalem to worſhip, and be in danger of returning to their king Rehoboam again: for it is hardly to be ſuppoſed that Jeroboam ſhould ſo ſoon perſuade all the ten tribes into ſuch groſs idolatry as to worſhip mere calves, though the ſcripture calls them ſo, as uſually it does all idols by ſome word of contempt.

This idolatry, or worſhipping a mere calf, would have been too plain and too groſs to be impoſed upon the people at firſt, and that ſo ſoon after their ſeparation from Judah and Jeruſalem, this being ſo expreſsly contrary to the ſecond command, "Thou ſhalt not make unto thyſelf any graven image, nor the likeneſs of any thing that is in heaven, or earth, or water," &c. Now, if we ſuppoſe a cherub to be the figure of a winged ox, or any other winged figure with the face and feet of an ox ſuperadded, it will not be the likeneſs or image of any thing in heaven, earth, or water, and conſequently Jeroboam might perſuade the people that this was not plainly forbidden; nay, more, that it was ordered by Moſes in the tabernacle, and ſuch figures were in the temple.

Let it be further added, that when the worſhip of Baal was introduced into Iſrael by Ahab, it ſeems to be a different idol from the calves at Dan and Bethel, and yet it was ſomething akin to it. The image of Baal was the image of a heifer, as we are told in the firſt chapter of Tobit, ver. 5. and it is evident that Baal is ſometimes uſed in the maſculine and ſometimes in

in the feminine. See 1 Kings xvi. 31. in the Septuagint, 1 Kings xix. 18. and the citation of that text in Rom. xi. 4. But if Baal was a common heifer, it is probable theſe calves of Jeroboam were ſomething different; for it is plain from many ſcriptures that Baal was an idol of the Canaanites, which Ahab worſhipped, when both king and people had grown bold in their idolatry: but the calves were deſigned by Jeroboam for ſymbols of the preſence of Jehovah the God of Iſrael, and therefore probably they were not common calves, but cherubs, or winged oxen, or a figure near akin to thoſe in the temple of Jeruſalem.

6. It is further added as another reaſon, that though the tribe of Judah imitated Iſrael in all their other ſhapes of idolatry, yet they never imitated Jeroboam's calves: now what reaſon can be given for this, unleſs it be becauſe the Jews are ſuppoſed to have had the very originals at Jeruſalem; that is, the cherubs upon the mercy-ſeat in the form of flying calves and oxen.

Theſe arguments ſeem to carry great weight with them; yet others have ſuppoſed the cherub to be a winged man, becauſe it is deſcribed often with one face at leaſt as a man, and alſo with hands in ſcripture. Some of the Jews ſay, it is a young man in beauty and vigour, becauſe it has been generally taken for granted that the cherubs repreſent angels, which are God's attendants, whoſe vigour and beauty are ever freſh and immortal, and angels, they ſay, always appear under the figure of men: and they ſuppoſe that in this form multitudes of them were wrought in the curtains and vail, and all the parts of the tabernacle and temple, as intimating the preſence of angels where God dwells.

It is granted that cherubs repreſent angelic powers, attending on the great God, but whether the form of a winged man were wrought on the curtains or vail is yet in doubt: and whether this argument be ſufficient to out-weigh all that is ſaid in favour of the ſhape of winged oxen let the reader judge.

This I think is remarkable, that though angels are always introduced ſpeaking as men with a voice, and ſeraphs alſo ſpeak, as Iſa. vi. 3, 6, 7, yet I do not find

find that cherubs ever ſpoke: and when Ezekiel tells us in ſo diſtinguiſhing a manner, they had the hands of a man under their wings, Exek. i. 8. it looks as if all the reſt of their parts were not exactly thoſe of a man, but of a creature which is not ſo much deſigned to perform rational or human offices; ſince it appears there, and in other places, as ſome kind of living vehicle or divine equipage, rather than as a rational attendant on the majeſty of God, exerciſing its intellectual powers.

Perhaps we have not any place of ſcripture from which we can derive the complete figure of a cherub better than the firſt, and tenth, and forty-firſt chapters of Ezekiel; for all the four animals in Ezekiel's viſion which are mentioned Ezek. i. 5. and x. 14. are ſeveral times called cherubs.

If we inquire what their body or general figure was, the prophet ſays, it was the figure or likeneſs of a man, Ezek. i. 5. But each of them had four faces, and each had four wings, ver. 6. Their legs were ſtraight, probably like the fore-legs of a calf or ox, or like the legs of a man; and their feet were cloven as an ox's foot, ver. 7. Under their wings they had the hands of a man on their four ſides, ver. 8.

Each of them had the face of a man before, and this ſtood in the middle between the face of a lion on the right ſide, and the face of an ox or a calf on the left ſide; and the face of an eagle perhaps was placed in the middle above him or behind, though it is not expreſsly ſaid it was behind, or above; but it is probably the four faces looked four different ways.

But here it muſt be obſerved, that what is called the face of an ox, Ezek. i, 10. is called the face of a cherub, ſuppoſing them the ſame, Ezek. x. 14. A cherub has alſo the feet of a calf or ox, as before mentioned. So that a cherub appears upon the whole to be nearer to the figures of a winged ox and a man with wings, than to any other creature; for it has the hands, body, and face of a man, and it has alſo the face and feet of an ox: it has nothing of a lion but the face, and that is not always mentioned: it has indeed the wings of an eagle

eagle always, but an eagle's face is mentioned as one part of a cherub no where elſe but in this viſion.

Note, This viſion does not deſcribe whither each of thoſe animals had four feet or two; but it is probable they had but two feet, becauſe it is ſaid they had the likeneſs of a man, that is, the figure of his body.

It is plain they had four wings, ver. 6. two of their wings were ſtretched upward as for flight, and two covered their bodies, that is, the lower part of their body, for which decency requires a covering. It is very ridiculous therefore to deſcribe them, as ſome painters do, like naked boys, with little wings on their ſhoulders only.

In theſe four various faces, the various properties of angels ſeem to be repreſented, (viz.) the underſtanding and beauty of a man, the obedience and labour or diligence of an ox, the courage and ſtrength of a lion, together with the ſharp ſight and ſwiftneſs of an eagle, in fulfilling the commands of God, and in adminiſtering his providence.

It may not be improper alſo to take notice here, that theſe four creatures, (viz.) a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, are unanimouſly reported by the Jews, though not with ſufficient proof, to have been wrought upon the ſtandards of the four leading tribes of the camp of Iſrael, as they are ranged, Numb. ii. (viz.) a lion the ſtandard of Judah, a man the ſtandard of Reuben, an ox the ſtandard of Ephraim, and an eagle the ſtandard of Dan. And theſe alſo were the figures of the four living creatures, in Greek ζῶα, which ought not to be tranſlated beaſts, Rev. iv. 6. that are before the throne of God; who had each of them ſix wings, and were full of eyes, and are ever engaged in divine worſhip. Theſe figures in the ſeveral places may denote that wherever God is, the creatures that attend him, whether they be men or angels, ſhould be furniſhed with theſe qualifications, (viz.) underſtanding, obedience, courage, and ſwiftneſs.

But let us proceed to ſearch out what is ſaid yet further concerning a cherub in ſcripture.

In Ezek. xli. 19, 25. the inner part of Ezekiel's temple was adorned with intermingled cherubs and palm-trees

palm-trees carved on the walls and the doors. Here every cherub had two faces, (viz.) that of a man and that of a lion; but as they are called cherubs, we may ſtill conclude their feet were the feet of a calf or ox. And why may not Solomon's temple be adorned with the ſame ſort of cherubim and palm-trees, 1 Kings vi. 29. that is, with the faces of a man and a lion, and the feet of an ox, though their faces are not expreſsly mentioned in that place.

Solomon's ten lavers for the temple had their ſeveral baſes adorned in the border between the ledges with lions, oxen, and cherubs, 1 Kings vii. 29. ſo that here a cherub ſeems to be mentioned inſtead of the face of a man, and to be diſtinguiſhed from an ox, though in Ezekiel's viſion, chap. i. and x. the face of a cherub is plainly the ſame with the face of an ox. Yet on the plates of the ledges were cherubim, lions, and palm-trees, 1 Kings vii. 36. where neither the face of an ox nor man is mentioned.

Perhaps theſe differences may be in ſome meaſure reconciled, if we obſerve that theſe cherubs which adorned the walls of Ezekiel's viſionary temple, and of Solomon's real temple, and the borders of the brazen lavers, are only graven or carved upon the flat or plane, or at leaſt with ſome little protuberance above the flat, which the Italians call *baſſo relievo*: and then that figure which would have had all four faces viſible, if it had ſtood forth by itſelf as a real animal, or a ſtatue, (viz.) that of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, can have but two faces viſible, or three at the moſt, when figured upon a plain or flat ſurface; the other one or two being hid behind: and thus the cherubs may be in all theſe places the ſame four-faced animals, and yet only two or three of their faces appear according to their deſigned ſituation and the art of perſpective. And perhaps Solomon might diverſify theſe figures, for the ſake of variety in different parts of theſe ſacred works *.

Upon

* It is the opinion of ſome learned men, that Ezekiel's temple was but a kind of repetition of the pattern of the ſame temple

Upon the whole, what if we ſhould conclude a cherub to be moſt uſually figured with a body like a man with four wings, two whereof are ſtretched for flight, and two covering the lower parts; with the feet of an ox or calf; with the head of a man or an ox, whatever other faces were joined to it, whether lions or eagles, or whether it had any other face or no. It is more likely there was but one ſort of face belonged to each of the two cherubs on the mercy-ſeat, becauſe it is ſaid their faces looked toward one another; but whether this was the face of an ox or a man, is not yet abſolutely determined.

I think we may allow Jeroboam to be ſuppoſed to imitate theſe cherubs which were on the mery-ſeat, in his idolatrous worſhip; and though they had not the perfect ſhape of a calf, yet they might be called calves in ſcripture-language, by way of reproach and contempt, becauſe they had the feet of a calf, if not the head alſo.

It is evident that Aaron's idol, which was called the golden calf, had more of the reſemblence of an ox or calf than of a man, becauſe the Iſraelites are ſaid to change their glory, that is their God, into the ſimilitude of an ox that eateth graſs, Pſal. cvi. 19, 20. which would hardly have been thus expreſt, if the idol had nothing of a calf but its feet.

If any will imagine that in Pſal. xviii. where God is ſaid to ride upon a cherub, the grandeur and terror of the appearance may require the whole figure of a flying ox rather than of a flying man, or rather of a flying animal with all theſe four faces, I will not oppoſe it; ſince it is plain, from this whole account, that a cherub is deſcribed ſometimes more like a winged ox, and ſometimes more like a winged man

temple which God gave to David, and by which Solomon built his temple. And that this pattern was given to Ezekiel that he might ſhew it the Jews, if they were pious and obedient, to animate them to hope for another temple in their own land, and to inſtruct them in the building of it when they ſhould be releaſed from Babylon. Ezek. xl. 4. and xliii. 10 11. ſince it was ſuppoſed none remained who could remember ſo much of the old temple as to give particular directions for the building of it.

man with feet like oxen or calves. But where it is repreſented complete in all its various forms united, as in the firſt and tenth chapters of Ezekiel, it ſeems to be the body of a winged man with calves feet, and with four faces, (viz.) that of a man, an ox, a lion, and an eagle; and thus it is always deſigned to repreſent the various properties of angels, which are attendants upon the bleſſed God, more perfectly than any one of theſe creatures could do alone.

Perhaps when the Jewiſh nation ſhall be converted and become believers in Chriſt, there may be ſuch a new effuſion of the Spirit on men, or ſuch a happy diſcovery ſome way made of the darker parts of the Moſaic œconomy and the writings of the prophets, as may ſhew us much more of the reſemblance which God deſigned between the types of the law in the temple and prieſthood, and their antitypes in the goſpel, than has ever yet appeared; and among other things, the form of a cherub, as an attendance of angelic beings on the majeſty of God in the holy of holies, may appear more conſpicuouſly in its original truth and glory.

FINIS.